

# CALVINISM BY CALVIN;

BEING THE

SUBSTANCE OF DISCOURSES

DELIVERED

BY CALVIN AND THE OTHER MINISTERS OF GENEVA

ON THE

DOCTRINES OF GRACE.

*With an Introductory Essay,*

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## PUBLISHERS COMMENTS

This fascinating and very rare work of Robert Govett was done in his 27th year (1840). It is now being reissued in its second edition through the courtesy of Mr. Willis L. Bradley of New York City in his provision of an original copy.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introductory Essay . . . . .	1
Preface By Dr. C. Malan . . . . .	45
Greeting To The Believing Reader . . . . .	53
God's Election (As considered by the Church of Geneva) . . . . .	57
M. Abel Popin . . . . .	116
M. Jacques Bernard . . . . .	121
M. Nicholas Des Galars . . . . .	123
M. Philippe De Ecclesia . . . . .	125
M. Francois Bourgoing . . . . .	129
M. Loys Trepperau . . . . .	135
M. Remond Chauvet . . . . .	138
M. Matthew Malesian . . . . .	140
M. Michel Cop . . . . .	142
M. Jean Perery . . . . .	145
M. Jean Fabri . . . . .	147
M. Jean De St. Andie . . . . .	153



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Introductory Essay . . . . . 7

Editor by Dr. C. Malan . . . . . 13

Opening To The Believing Reader . . . . . 23

God's Election (As contained in the Church's Catechism) . . . . . 27

M. Abel Papi . . . . . 116

M. Jacques Bernard . . . . . 131

M. Nicholas Des Gales . . . . . 133

M. Philippe De Estienne . . . . . 133

M. Francois Bourgoing . . . . . 139

M. Louis Tardieu . . . . . 141

M. Leonard Gaurier . . . . . 148

M. Matthew Malan . . . . . 160

M. Michel Cap . . . . . 164

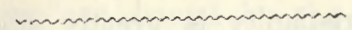
M. Jean Portier . . . . . 168

M. Jean Fehd . . . . . 167

M. Jean Desc. Aude . . . . . 171

AN

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.



CHRISTIANITY is a system: an union of related parts, whereof some are principal, some subordinate. Christianity as whole, aims at the eternal salvation of man: and to this point each part, whether of primary or secondary importance, has a decided tendency. It is true, that Scripture does not unfold its scheme in a *systematic manner*; it is not a series of Essays such as we find in the works of Theologians, wherein one part treats of Justification, another of Sanctification, or a third on the Divinity of Christ. This is perceptible at once: but the attentive eye is not slow in discovering that from the midst of its Gospels, Epistles, narratives, and prophecies, there arise certain truths conspicuous for their importance, which are more often refer-



red to, more fully developed, and more strongly confirmed than others.

Now our view of this system is liable to be greatly modified according to our point of sight. Christianity is greatly altered in its general appearance, as seen from the summit of Calvinism or Arminianism. As in the given dimensions of the temple of Solomon, the structure will differ greatly according to the value we assign to the cubit; so the doctrines alluded to modify materially the views of the Christian, with regard to the fundamental and prominent doctrine of his religion.

The doctrines especially affected by these two rival systems, are those of the fall and corruption of man, of original sin, redemption, sanctification, election, perseverance, heathen responsibility and salvation, and the nature of the Divine power and foresight.

Both schemes profess to explain difficulties, and to accord with Scripture. The question then for our decision is, If there be no system which can reconcile *all* difficulties, which will explain the *most*? Which is nearest in ac-

cordance with the Sacred Scriptures? Which demands less of forcing and unfair criticism in its interpretation of Scripture?

For as in physical, philosophical, and moral questions, we are bound by the dictates of reason of 'two evils, to choose the least,' so in religion are we bound to give in our adhesion to that scheme which agrees the most nearly with Scripture declarations, and solves the most material of objections, even though some may lie against it which we are unable to remove. Why do we reject as heretical the Socinian theory? Because it does not agree with Scripture assertions, and while it professes to solve some objections, is obliged to resort to violent methods of interpretation and critical decision, which present greater difficulties than those pretended to be removed?

It is also a doctrine of sound philosophy and reason, not to reject one set of facts because they seem at variance with another. If both be established by their separate and sufficient testimony, we must receive both, though our logical or philosophical acumen be unable to

find the connecting and reconciling link. It is for want of observing and practising this truth, that many mischiefs have arisen both to philosophy and religion.—Thus while many Calvinists have perceived the strength of the evidence for the disposing and dispensing power of the Most High, they have pushed it to such a point as to overwhelm the equally established proof of the responsibility of man.

It will be my endeavour in the following pages, to show the agreement of these co-ordinate truths in themselves and with Scripture, and as far as possible to *discover* that the doctrines of Grace, and those of the responsibility of man, are by no means so inconceivable as is commonly supposed. And if in any point this attempt should succeed, the author is desirous of acknowledging his obligations to the Rev. Dr. E. Williams, of Daventry, whose book on the Equity and Sovereignty of the Divine Administration, is (he thinks) the only volume that has satisfied the difficulties, which on this subject must arise in every thinking mind.

To some it appears unfitting that Christians should designate each other by such titles as Calvinist or Arminian, since none perhaps of those who bear those titles is guided in his belief by the writings or authority of Calvin or Arminius; and perhaps does in some material points differ from those authors. But it should be considered, that by these terms (except when used with a rancourous feeling of party spirit,) nothing more is meant than a peculiar set of opinions on the doctrine of Divine Grace and assistance; and that they are absolutely necessary as simple algebraic signs to express those differences of opinion, instead of resorting to a cumbrous periphrasis on every occasion on which those differences are discussed.

The Calvinist is not bound to adhere to every opinion of Calvin on the doctrine of Divine Grace; though he acknowledges when asked the nature of his sentiments on that topic, that they are Calvinistic. And in this discussion I shall conceive myself at liberty to explain and enforce those doctrines in the



main, while in some point I dissent from that fearless and intelligent commentator.

The Most High is represented to us in Holy Writ, as a being of united Justice and Mercy. Under these two attributes all his dealings towards his creatures are comprehended. Justice is restricted to a certain path: it acts according to certain laws known and promulgated beforehand. "Where there is no law there is no transgression;" and no justice. Mercy on the other hand (or Sovereignty as it may be also called,) has a wider field; provided that it does not interfere to prevent or control the decision of justice, its reign is unbounded. Justice is conversant with *claims*: and must act in accordance with those. Sovereignty is fettered by no such restriction. Justice is shown in the recompensing with pleasure and pain, according to desert. Sovereignty is shown in the distribution of *favours alone*. The one attribute (justice) in God corresponds to the freedom of man. For justice looks on man as an agent responsible for his actions. Sove-

reignty regards man as a passive being; as a creature capable of receiving fresh accession of pleasure and endowment, corporeal and spiritual.

Let us then regard the world in these two lights: as a world of justice, and a world of sovereignty. It has too often been regarded in the light of justice alone, though the impress of God's sovereignty is still more perceptible than that of his justice.

Observe the nations of the globe. How different their countries in point of fertility, healthiness, capacity, improvement. Observe the immense differences of labour required in a tropical and in an arctic country, to produce the necessaries of life. Notice the immense disparity in the civilization of nations. And now let us descend to the individual. If the differences between nations are great, not less are those which occur in individuals of the same nation. There are differences both paternal and artificial—of rank, of intellect, of muscular power and height, of beauty, of wealth, and of power. Some possess ap-



parently all endowments, both natural and acquired: others are deformed, unhealthy, blind, lame, idiotic, illegitimate.

Regard the world again as a series of successive ages. What a difference between the states of society in the antediluvian, patriarchal, Assyrian, Babylonian, Grecian, and Roman ages! How great the difference between the dark ages and the present, in every relation of society. And how variously shadowed are those times with war and peace, plenty and famine, health and pestilence, learning and ignorance.

But all these varieties of life are decided not by ourselves, but by our Creator. We have no power over the nation or the time of our birth. We exercise no choice respecting the abilities, the rank, the health, the riches, we shall possess. To each *is assigned* his place, and "by taking thought none can add a cubit to his stature." Here is the exhibition of sovereignty dividing to every man his lot, even as willeth the Great Disposer.

But we would not be supposed to overlook

the indications presented by this world as a theatre for the exhibition of God's justice. In accordance with this attribute, nations are punished for national guilt, by the sword, famine, and pestilence. In accordance with this perfection of the Most High, diligence in the business of life ordinarily meets with success; while the devotees of vicious and sinful pleasures receive an instalment of recompense for their corrupt deeds in disease, remorse, loss of friends, poverty, disgrace, and death.

The original endowments presented by the mercy of God, are themselves subject to the control of justice. The man who is exalted above his fellows in the highest degree by rank, birth, riches, and intellectual power, if he offend against the laws devised and sanctioned by the Creator, as surely though perhaps more slowly reaps those penalties as the very meanest.

The world then presents these two attributes of God as alike in exercise everywhere. The one view discovers God as a Sovereign, doing as he pleases with gifts of his own; the other

represents him as being also a Judge to judge, "rewarding the recompense of a man's hands unto him." It is not meant however that the display of either attribute is in this world complete. The exhibition of justice is less manifest than that of sovereignty.

We begin then by a very simple postulate. The Creator has a right to create as many beings as he pleases, possessed of such powers as he pleases. This is the consequence of his attribute of sovereignty. He claims it for himself as his own peculiar right. He has a power and right as the potter over the clay. "The thing formed may not say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" See also Isa. lxxv. 10. It is enough for a creature made by God's creative power, that its nature be upright, as *must be the case* with every thing that proceeds from a perfectly Holy God.

Sovereignty then was shown in the creation of man, in making such a being endowed with such and such noble gifts, and set over the other creatures as the ruler and lord.

Sovereignty was shown in the planting of Eden, the beauties of its garden, the formation of the woman as his helpmeet. Then Justice came in to place man under a scheme of government. It gave him a law, whose sanction was death. Let us now for a moment consider Adam and Eve as innocent creatures, and enquire a moment, What claims had they upon God? For as all injustice is a violation of rightful claims, by discovering their claim, (if any,) we shall perceive if the Most High wronged them. And here we boldly answer, They had none, except the claim implied in the law itself which was given. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Here it is implied, that life was assured to them as long as they were not disobedient; and this therefore by implication they might claim as a promise included in the law thus given. But *originally* they had no such right. What creature may not justly be deprived of that which is a gift held during pleasure? An angel that has remained perfect may be (if the will of God be so), deprived of that



life at a moment's warning, even though unsullied. It is a gift enjoyed during the given pleasure, and the being may be (if it be the will of God,) annihilated. Out of nothing the angel came, and to it he may be caused to return. The possession of life *now*, holds out no right to it for the *time to come*. We put a mere supposable case, however, to show the power of the Most High, if he be pleased to exercise it.

Beyond then, the implied promise of life, Adam and Eve had no claim upon the Almighty Creator. They had no demand upon his Sovereign mercy to *keep* them holy. They were made upright: they were placed amidst means suitable to keep them so. The justice of God left them to themselves, with full liberty and power to resist the temptations which surrounded them. The tempter came; they listened: they fell. God neither *decreed* their fall, nor *decreed to permit* it. He simply left them to stand or fall, foreseeing indeed certainly their fall, but not necessitating it in any way. If we ask the reason why man

fell, we answer—that *liability* to corruption is inherent in the nature of every creature. God alone is unchangeable: the creature, *because a creature*, must be liable to fall. The creature by his very nature is *defectible*. Unchangeableness is an attribute of God which cannot be communicated to a creature, and is as much the necessary attribute of God as infinity or eternity. From the simple fact that any being is not God, he is related necessarily to error, limit, and deceptibility. Whatever perfection the creature possesses, is from the Giver of all good things; but limit and a liability to fall, are not *caused* by the Creator: they are a necessary result of the being of every creature, which the Creator himself (we say it with reverence), cannot remove. For God is able to do all that involves not a contradiction: but that a creature should be by nature infinitely unchangeable, is a contradiction.\*

\* This is a case of which has been called a negative cause. As for instance, that a man should die to-day, it is absolutely necessary that he should have been alive yesterday; yet his being alive yesterday is



Every being then that is created, is liable to fall. And this liability to fall produces as its natural result *actual disobedience*, when the creature is left to itself.

God therefore the sole possessor of infinite perfection is not and cannot be the *cause* of sin: though by making a creature which must always be liable to fall, he affords an *occasion* for defect to arise. Defect and sin are not positive beings: but a want of holiness; a failure as measured by the standard of right.

And if we may ask with all humility, why man was suffered to fall, we should say it was to teach the universe one great lesson, that all creatures carry the seed of mutability within them, and are both liable to fall, and sure to

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not the (efficient) cause of his dying to-day. So with man's fall. That he should decline from the commands of God and his own uprightness, it was necessary that he should be an upright creature. For as a creature only, could he be liable to defect; and as upright only, could he be subject to a charge of unholiness.

fall except upheld by the Great Unchangeable! Surely this presents us with the most awful view of the infinite perfections of God, when set beside the comparative limitation and deficiencies of all created natures!

But we proceed to the effects of the fall. The sin of our first parents ruined not themselves only, but their race. It ruined the race in a two-fold manner: primarily because Adam stood as the representative of mankind; by whose holiness had he stood firm, all would have been holy; by whose fall therefore, and unholiness, all are unholy in the sight of God and subject to his wrath. This is the declaration of Scripture. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." "The judgment was by one to condemnation." "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation." "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." So likewise saith the Church of England in her 9th Article. Original sin standeth not in the following of

Adam, but is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam . . . and in every person born into this world it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. To a like purpose though not to the same extent is the observation of bishop Butler, that mankind is in a state of degradation, however difficult it may be to account for it; and that the crime of our first parents was the cause of our being put in a more disadvantageous condition.

We are secondarily the just subjects of God's wrath, as being unfit by nature for any other arrangement of God's government. We could not even if Adam's sin were pardoned, become thereby fit to take our places amongst holy orders of beings; because our *nature* is corrupt and would produce confusion amongst the happy, as well as uneasiness in our own persons.

In short the result of the fall upon the posterity of Adam is, that his nature is changed to evil; and as the will is always directed by the nature of the being, so man's

corrupt nature always leads him to choose evil. And moreover his understanding is darkened; a thing to which he was clearly liable as the *natural* consequence of sin. For a moral system supposes "the possibility of losing the right once enjoyed, as a righteous forfeiture."

Yet still man is free.—For the word 'free' has two different senses, one signifying an absence of all bias, as a needle hung exactly on its centre and exactly in a horizontal position. In this sense no man is free; for every one has a bias, and a bias towards evil. And Adam was free, yet he had a bias, and that bias towards good. So God is free, yet the necessity of his nature inclines him to good. There is likewise a second meaning of the word free, and that is *that the person acts as he pleases*; no one forcing him to do evil, or restraining him from doing good.

In this sense man is free; God never hinders him from doing that which is holy and pure, nor does he *force* him to commit sin. Man therefore is free: he acts as he pleases.



But we may also say and with equal truth that man is enslaved. He acts indeed as he pleases: but his nature being evil, his choice is always in the direction of evil, and his pleasure being thus in the pursuit and enjoyment of evil, which will ultimately destroy him soul and body, he is justly called a slave.

We come then to consider what claims has man in this fallen state upon the Great Creator? And surely if an innocent being has no claim upon God to be kept holy, much less has a rebellious being any right to expect mercy—still less, if possible, any claim to be *renewed*.

Here then we directly contradict an opinion but too prevalent, that except God give the Holy Spirit to all, and except he by baptism take away the natural preponderance of man to iniquity, so that henceforward the scale of his nature shall hang even, he is unjust. On this point the objectors are at variance both with reason and Scripture. With reason—as seen by analogy: for in the case of a debt due, the law does not take into consideration

the capability of the party to pay it: but simply enquires if the debt is due. If this claim can be made out, the debtor is bound over to pay, and his plea that he is unable to pay a tittle of it, goes for nothing. If a debtor owe a thousand pounds justly, and be a naked beggar, the law of justice surrenders him to prison when once the claim is proved. This is the case *whatever be the circumstances* which reduced the debtor to absolute poverty. If by unavoidable events this poverty has been induced, the judge may pity, but the sentence must stand. But the case of man is far different. His debt is the consequence of wilful neglect and extravagance. And the landlord is not obliged to give up his claim, because the tenant has dissipated what was due as rent. So with God. That Adam corrupted himself, and his posterity by the natural law of transmission, does not deprive the Creator of his right to receive honour, obedience and love from his creature. Nor again does it signify to the judge that he has nothing wherewith to pay the debt. “ And



forasmuch as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had." "The judge shall deliver thee to the officer, and thou shalt be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt not come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."

If God had *obliged* man to sin, the case would have been altered: but if it be impious and anti-scriptural to believe this, then God's claims upon man for unswerving obedience is as just now, as it was ere Adam fell.

Viewed then through the attribute of justice alone, the world and every individual of it is lost beyond recovery; lost by participation in the sinfulness of Adam's transgression; lost by participation of a corrupted nature; in adults lost by many actual transgressions.

Into this dreary state of things Sovereignty enters to provide a way of recovery. I say Sovereignty—for man has no claim upon God to do ought to save him. And thus the choosing to give a promise to any was an act

of free mercy. The separating a particular family, for the reception of heavenly and saving truth from the midst of perishing thousands of impious and proud idolaters, was an act of supreme benevolence.

Considered thus, even the law given on Sinai was an act of mercy, though by its letter, it treated man according to justice. For the taking man into covenant again with the Almighty after his fall, was an exercise of Sovereign grace. But the law in its spirit came as a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ Jesus. And the aspect of this last covenant is universal. No son of man is excluded from its benefit. Its redemption of mercy extends backwards to those under the former covenants; and by anticipation of faith in that which was to come, *they* were saved. And from the present day its power of forgiveness extends to the last sin that shall be committed in time. Its remission of sins shuts out no one but such as judge themselves unworthy of eternal life.

But the question has ever since the days

of Christianity been asked, and will be it is probable, till its close, 'For whom did Christ die, for all men, or for the elect only?' One would have thought there could be no doubt on this point had men attended only to the direct teaching of Scripture. "Christ (says St. John) is set forth to be a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world." "God is the Saviour of all men." "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." "Christ came not to judge the world but to save the world." "Christ, (said his ordained Messenger,) is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." The same is implied most forcibly in the comparison between Adam and Christ. The first man fell, and by his disobedience merited death for all: the second man even Christ by his obedience merited life for all. "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men to justification of life." "We thus judge that if one

died for all, then were all dead." 2 Cor. v. 14.\*

The death and merits of Christ have then introduced a new dispensation of salvation. Its universal law runs thus, that whosoever believeth on the Son of God shall not perish but have everlasting life." Whosoever fulfils this condition, him God is bound in justice to admit to eternal happiness.

But is man left then to himself? Are all men abandoned to their natural powers to fulfil this condition of belief?

No, for Scripture saith that faith is "the gift of God." Here then Sovereign mercy enters into God's dealings with men; for while Justice has jurisdiction over claims, Sovereignty dispenses favours. But upon Sovereignty there is no claim. If faith be the "gift of God," he may bestow it on whom

\* Where the argument is this; If Christ's death be for *all men*, it must be because all are dead; for that Christ should die to give life to those who have it, is absurd. But here the conclusion is assumed as if it were more evident that Christ died for every man, than it is that all men by nature are spiritually dead.



he will: as 'his own' he may do with it as he pleases. And this leads us to notice another class of texts which occurs in Holy Scripture, speaking of Christ's death as having a special reference to some. He "is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe." Jesus "laid down his life for his sheep." "Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep as I said unto you." "Jesus died for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that he might gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad." "For God hath not appointed us to wrath but to *obtain salvation* through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died *for us*, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with him." "No man cometh unto me except the Father which hath sent me, draw him." "I pray not for the world."

We arrive then at this conclusion, that the death of Christ had a twofold purpose, a general, and a particular. In pursuance of the general purpose, Christ is the second Great Head of the family of man: so that when he died, he "tasted of death for every man."

And as Adam by his universal relation to the human race, has brought death upon all: so Christ by his universal relation to mankind shall raise all from the dead. "As in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." But this relation is a natural relation only. It arises simply from man's partaking of the same flesh as Christ. There is yet a spiritual relation needed. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." As partakers of the spirit of the first Adam all are condemned; but all men may be saved by partaking of the Spirit of the second Adam.

If any therefore reject this mercy of God it will turn to his heavier condemnation. For upon the death of Jesus as a man for men, is founded this impartial proposition which at the last day will be decided according to strict justice, "*Whosoever* believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "To him give all the Prophets witness that *whosoever* believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

Nothing can be more general than this



scheme. It extends to every individual of Adam's race, for there is no decree of reprobation. The *only* reason why any come not to God is, the unbelief of their hearts. This was neither produced, nor decreed by God, but simply foreseen. It does not destroy man's accountability; far from it, his inability to love God, and to believe in Christ, is only a moral inability. According to the capacity of his nature, he can love God *if he will*. But here lies the dreadful truth,—since the creation of the world, *no man has willed* to love God. Justice then is free to take vengeance on such a wilful sinner.

But within this larger scheme there is a particular one: Faith is required by God's law, in order to salvation; and faith we have seen is "the *gift* of God." From many passages of Holy Scripture then, we gather that there is a *secret covenant*, which arranges to whom God will dispense this free gift of faith, and thereby assure their salvation. The larger scheme is proclaimed openly to man, because that shall be administered by justice;

and justice requires that laws should be promulgated, before they are made the ground of condemnation or acceptance. But the particular covenant is secret with God, because its provisions are administered by Sovereignty, and there is no claim that any should know the benign dispensation of God. As Supreme Governor then possessed of justice, he provides salvation for *all* that will believe. As Supreme benefactor, he disposes of, the means of salvation as gifts to *some*.

God desires not the death of any. The provision of a Saviour, proves this with the utmost clearness. Had he desired the death of men, he had but to leave the world to itself, and all alike must have perished. But the gift of a Saviour is an act of boundless grace. It is the superogation of mercy. We must regard the fact in itself—not in its actual results. The mercy of God is herein discovered to man, distinct altogether from the question whether man will receive him or no. That man rejects the Saviour offered, arises not from God's decree of reprobation, but

man's deep depravity of spirit. But this in no wise lessens the loving-kindness of our God.

This distinction between the *general intention* and the *actual result* may be illustrated by the dispensation of light. God hath set the sun in the sky, as we may suppose, 'that *all who will* may partake of his light;' but men if they will, can close their eyes or blindfold them; they can dig themselves caves, and shut out his light and heat at once. This general design of God is fulfilled whether men enjoy his beams or no. For the design as stated was, that all who *would* should receive illumination. This answers to God's declaration, "that God sent his son into the world, that *whosoever believeth in him*, should not perish, but have everlasting life." But since the sun's shining would be in vain, if there were no creatures to gladden with his light, it seems implied that there shall be *actually* beings, who rejoice in his splendor. This answers to the decree of election whereby God makes Christ "specially the Saviour of

them that believe," and by a merciful power exerted on their souls, bringing them to everlasting salvation.

The wider and the narrower scheme perfectly accord. The wider scheme declares that all that will believe shall receive everlasting life. The narrower, that such an elect number shall certainly be saved. The one design does not hinder the other. Christ's death *actually shall* save "as many as God hath ordained to eternal life." It *may* save all the world if they believe. The names of the elect are certainly written in the book of life. But this does not offer any obstacle to the salvation of any one else. Because God has ordained some to life, it does not follow, that therefore he has hindered all the rest from attaining salvation. To prove that this is not so, he hath given a Saviour for all. Scripture doth not say, he that is not elected by God, shall be damned: but only "he that believeth not." God's justice will at the last acquit the saved, not because he elected them, but because they believed in his Son. The only



question in the day of judgment will be, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" Whether God has favoured any with mercies, will not be the question, and any such plea will be dismissed as foreign to the business in hand. "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works. Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." The condemnation will be that any have not believed in the Son of God, who died for them.

Let us further illustrate the subject by the case of treaties between kings and states. Beside the public treaty promulgated openly to all the world, there is frequently a secret treaty, which contains particulars not written in the public treaty, but perfectly consistent with it. History will easily furnish us with an instance. In the time of Charles V. some of the Protestants made a mutual league and covenant. Let us suppose that there

were two treaties; — one public, the other secret. The public treaty sets forth that all cities which will sign by their authorities, a certain confession of faith shall be taken into participation of the advantages proposed by the treaty. The secret treaty contains the names of those cities which the parties were certain would agree to it. There is no inconsistency here. It were absurd for any city to say, we cannot join you, because we do not know if our name is named in your secret covenant. The answer would be immediate, 'You have nothing to do with the secret treaty; you have only to sign by your chief citizens and authorities, the specified confession of faith. All that comply with this condition shall be received.'

There is an absolute necessity for both the one scheme and the other. The *general* covenant of Redemption is necessary, because all men cannot be commanded to believe in a Saviour that never died for them; nor can they be condemned for unbelief, if they never had an interest in Christ's blood. The *par-*

*ticular* covenant of redemption (commonly called election,) is necessary, because, had the general covenant alone been adopted, none would have believed. Owing to man's rebellious heart, the offer of a Saviour would have been universally rejected. Men are as unwilling (and therefore unable) to comply with the Gospel command, 'Believe and be saved,' as with the demand of the law, to 'keep all the statutes of the Lord, that he might be saved by them.' Therefore that the death of Christ might not through man's wilful obstinacy, if left to himself be frustrated, the Three Ever Blessed Persons indited that covenant which specifies certain individuals as the assured participants of salvation.

The above view places salvation on the exact footing established by Scripture. A Saviour is provided for all. They then that perish, perish justly. "The wages of sin is death." God by the death of Christ proclaims that all are lost, and can only be saved through him. They then that believe not are virtually condemned already, and shall be

actually at the day of judgment, because they make God a liar, in not believing the record that God gave of his Son. But if any are saved it is "by grace alone."

"The *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." And God's choice of any to salvation is entirely without regard to their works. A Benefactor may give to the most undeserving. Benevolence says Bacon, "admits of no excess but error." And we are repeatedly informed that God is induced to this choice by nothing that was in the creature. He gave not the promised land to Israel because they were better than others, for they are repeatedly told how stiff-necked and provoking a people they were. Before yet Jacob and Esau were born or had done good or evil, and though they were the children of one father, God chose the one and rejected the other. And speaking on this very point, God challenges this rule of distribution to himself, 'I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy.' Do any allege against this that it represents God as



arbitrary? We answer, if they mean by arbitrary, that he does all, moved by no other consideration than his own most holy wisdom, it is perfectly true. But if they mean that God is capricious herein—they blaspheme. Is nothing right save that of which we know the reasons? “For who hath known the mind of the Lord! or with whom took he counsel. Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?”

But is not this an “accepting of persons?” a thing which the Most High declares he hates? By no means. Acceptance of persons is a forensic term. It supposes a court of justice and a judge sitting to decide in his office. If herein he be moved either by favor, fear, or affection, so as to make the punishment of the criminal heavier or lighter *than he deserves*, in short, if he be guided in his decision by any thing but the facts of the case, and the decree of the law, he is an acceptor of persons. But this attaches to him only while exercising the office of a judge. When he has left his court of justice,

he has as great a license as any one to dispense his favors to whom he will, nor is he obliged to declare the reasons that moved him thereto.

The most specious mis-representation of the doctrine in question that I am aware of is to be found in the works of *Fletcher*, of *Madely*. He puts it thus, “I suppose you are upon your travels. You come to the borders of a great empire, and the first thing that strikes you is a man in an easy carriage going with folded arms to take possession of an immense estate freely given him by the king of the country. As he flies along you just make out the motto of the royal chariot in which he dozes—‘Free Reward.’ Soon after you meet five of the king’s carts, containing 20 wretches loaded with irons, and the motto of every cart is—‘Free Punishment.’ You enquire into the meaning of this extraordinary procession and the sheriff attending the execution answers, ‘Know, curious stranger, that our Sovereign is absolute, and to show that Sovereignty is the prerogative of his imperial

crown, and that he is no respecter of persons, he distributes every day free rewards and free punishments to a certain number of his subjects.' 'What! without any regard to merit or demerit? by mere caprice?' 'Not altogether so; for he pitches upon the worst of men and chief of sinners, and from such he chooses the subjects of his rewards. (El. Coles p. 62.) And that his punishments may do as much honour to free sovereign wrath, as his bounty does to free sovereign grace, he pitches upon those that shall be executed, before they are born.' 'What! have these poor creatures in chains done no harm?' 'Oh yes,' says the sheriff, 'the king contrived that their parents should let them fall and break their legs before they had any knowledge: when they came to years of discretion, he commanded them to run a race with broken legs, and because they cannot do it, I am going to see them quartered. Some of them besides this have been obliged to fulfil the *king's secret will*, and to bring about his purpose, and they shall be burned in yonder deep valley called

Tophet, for their trouble.' You are shocked at the sheriff's account, and begin to expostulate with him about the freeness of the wrath which burns a man for doing the king's will: but all the answer you can get from him is, that which you give me in your fourth letter, p. 23, where speaking of a poor reprobate, you say, 'Such a one is indeed accomplishing the king's (you say God's) decree; but he carries a dreadful mark in his forehead that such a decree is that he shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the lord of the country.' You cry out, 'God deliver me from the hands of a monarch who *punishes with everlasting destruction* such as accomplish his decree!' And while the magistrate intimates that your exclamation is a *dreadful mark*, if not on your forehead, at least upon your tongue, that you yourself shall be apprehended against the next execution, and made a public instance of the king's free wrath, your blood runs cold; you bid the postilion turn the horses, they gallop for your life, and the moment you get out of the dreary



land you bless God for your narrow escape. (Fletcher, vol. 9. p. 25.)

The fallacies which lie here are numerous ; the principal are, that *punishments* are distributed by the attribute of Sovereignty, instead of by the attribute of Justice ; and next, that the dealing of God towards the non-elect is precisely correspondent with God's dealings with the elect. Now with regard to the latter, there is this remarkable *difference* between election and reprobation. The non-elect are *hurrying themselves* to perdition with all their might ; they hate God with a true enmity, and love sin with their soul. We say, there is no decree of God pronouncing that they must go on to death. Taking the subject in its most invidious light, there is no such decree, because it *were of no use*. Why determine to do that which certainly shall be done ; which is accomplishing already without any decree ? As well might the king of England make a law that fire shall burn wood ! God simply leaves the non-elect to themselves. Here in this Christian country he does indeed

set before them that most excellent means of return to him, the death of his Son, and pardon flowing from it ; but they *will not accept it*. But with regard to the elect, the case is altered.

They need God's decree of election and salvation, because they never would save themselves, if God gave them up to their own hearts' lusts. The rolling stone if left to itself will indeed plunge and bound downward, by its *native force of gravity* : but the stone that is to rise up-hill needs a force *from without* to check its descent and to lift it upward.

Again, Sovereignty only regards the distribution of benefit. Justice presides over the infliction of punishment. Hence gifts are free, for *there are no laws* of mercy ; punishments are due, for there *are* laws of justice. Salvation at the last is a *gift* : perdition is *wages*. But is not mention made in Scripture of rewards to the righteous ? Yes, but never is eternal life represented as a reward. "The *gift* of God is eternal life." It is awarded by mercy. But since in the other

state there is a difference of rank among the saved; so according to the various degrees of attainment in holiness here, shall men be ranked in that blisful world. Everlasting life is a gift: its degree of glory are rewards.

Another mis-statement is to be noted in the words, "the king contrived that their parents should let them fall; and break their legs before they had any knowledge, and when they came to years of discretion he commanded them to run a race with broken legs, and because they cannot do it, I am going to see them quartered." God did *not* contrive that Adam should fall; he foresaw it, and he was not bound to prevent it, but he did not decree or contrive it in any way. Adam fell of his own free will, without any inclination to evil infused by a just and Holy God. The running a race with broken legs is a false analogy. Man's inability is not a *natural* inability; as it is impossible for a man with a broken leg to walk: It is a *moral* inability. He *will* not walk at the command of God, he is too proud or too sluggish. A truer analogy

is the following: Suppose a feudal lord has a right to assemble all his subjects in armour to go forth to war or fulfil his pleasure in any way, when summoned by the castle bell. It is death not to attend this summons. But though his retainers at first loved their lord, a traitor enters their houses, and by raising false reports of their master, poisons their minds against him. In this juncture the alarm sounds. Not one obeys it. They are all by that act guilty of death. But the lord in kindness to them sends his son to their houses, to counterwork the designs of his treacherous foe, and to assure them of pardon, if they will return. They refuse to hear. They wound and imprison him, but he escapes. Still he sends messengers to particular persons among the rebels, and by adapting his messages to the person with whom he has to deal, he wins many back to his father. To one man he promises power, to another honour, to another wealth; and these inducements prevail on them to return to their allegiance. The others take no notice of the general act



of amnesty, and persisting in their rebellion after a stated time of forbearance, their town is burned and their persons executed. Their reason for not returning was not that they had broken legs, and so could not walk, but that they were too proud and rebellious to put them in motion at the command of their liege lord.

Once more, the wicked are punished, not for fulfilling God's will by their acts: but (supposing for a moment what is not proved, that God decrees such and such actions of theirs) for the *wicked spirit* in which it is done. The crucifiers of Christ will be punished because they with feelings of rage and malignity put Jesus to death, "with *wicked* hands they crucified and slew him." Supposing even that God had decreed that they should put Jesus to death—he did not cause or decree the wicked passions with which they did it, and we may conceive that great sacrifice to have been accomplished by man with feelings as holy and full of faith as Abraham's virtual sacrifice of Isaac. Their fulfilling of

God's will was only as the logicians say, accidental: it was the very farthest thing from their desire to accomplish it: they were gathered together to baffle it,—and it was only God's "hook in their nose, and his bridle in their lips" that caused them to fulfil his purpose. They are to be punished for the wickedness of the act, not for its agreement or disagreement with a scheme of which they knew nothing.

From these observations it will be seen that there is here and there a statement in the 'Congregation' which follows at variance with what is stated here; as for instance that of Mr. Michael Crop—that the wicked are decreed to wrath from all eternity, as the righteous are decreed to life. This arose from a false assumption of symmetry in the dealings of God, where the cases are not by any means parallel; and I trust that I have answered this already, and exposed its fallacy. To the non-elect, outward means are granted—and the Spirit often strives with them: to the elect, the inward gift of the Spirit is given

and the heart is renewed thereby to listen to and to love the tidings of salvation. It is not *against* the will of men that this power is exerted—as where a man is irresistibly carried in a direction contrary to his desire. Far from it. No, the eyes of his understanding are enlightened—the natural mist of error that blind his eyes and prevents his discovering that he is on the brink of destruction's cliff is removed, and with trembling joy he starts back and leans on the arm that would rescue him.

PREFACE BY DR. C. MALAN.

*To the Genevese families who remain attached to our glorious Reformation, Grace and peace, from the Lord!—*

THE appearance presented in the present day at Geneva, is a strange phenomenon. The third jubilee of the glorious Reformation is proclaimed; the preparations for this solemn feast are announced; the nation is invited to pay respect to it: and all this (takes place,) while at the same time this Holy Reformation is stultified, and opposed (by men) who set themselves with asperity against its doctrines; that is to say, against the results of the Reformation. Never perhaps before, was there an example of a like inconsistency. Never before a monument so alien to the facts it recalls!



It is moreover from the very bosom of the college which laid the foundation of the Reformation, where Levites, capable of defending the deposit, ought to be training, that the blows are aimed, which would overthrow it, if it were not of God! He too whose office it is to instruct youth in protecting the ark of the faith, first publishes a book for the young against the Eternal Divinity of the Son of God, and next furnishes them with a publication against the Sovereign election of the Most High!

Thus the hand which ought to repair the breaches of the wall, redoubles its efforts to sap the foundations, by opposing the venerable faith of our ancestors, and by rejecting the belief of those pious Reformers, who fixed on the rock of the Bible, that chair (of the professorship), where he seats himself only to contradict them!

And the people praise him! They encourage him! Then they say, 'Let us keep the Jubilee! *The Jubilee!*' Alas! Rome at least is more consistent! If she institute a feast,

she keeps up its origin; she does not give the lie to herself! But poor Geneva of modern days disowns the Geneva of past times; and if her Reformation of 1538 were to re-appear in her walls, it could not but be greatly amazed at the festival prepared for it.

Judge of the truth of this for yourselves, ye pious Genevese! by comparing the doctrines which the books I have noticed spread in the midst of you, with those of the Church of your fathers. You have been able already to do this with regard to the Divinity of the Lord Jesus; make the comparison now on the question of God's Election.

It is taught, it is published among you, that this latter doctrine is contrary to reason, feeling, and Scripture. You then who possess reason and feeling, be herein loyal and sincere; and taking Scripture (as your guide), see if what you are about to read is, or is not conformable to it. You, too, who are men of judgment, observe two points: one, that at the present day it is an individual (with perhaps some imitators), who repeat his words

that says to you, 'Believe me,' but that then in our father's time it was the *pastors* of the Genevese State, who said to the people, 'Believe not us, but the Bible.' The other observation is, that if in our day it be an individual who in two or three publications tells you to become his disciples, then in our father's time the entire clergy, as enlightened, as sincere, in a temple, in the face of the assembled people, bore witness to the word of the Lord.

Oh! how much more noble and generous was the character of our fathers than that of their descendants! What firmness and what light in their paths! How at once edifying and pleasing must it have been to see all the spiritual guides of the clan of the Genevese, giving a reason for their belief, according to the Scriptures, in the presence of their dear flock, and with one accord censuring and rejecting that heresy which now is set up there.

How happy were the people in being so loved and so taught! How much to be lamented in the present day, that we are inun-

dated with writings which, by taking away from our city the very remnants of the ancient faith of the Reformation, are preparing for it a sad future!

O Genevese! when will you pay attention to the mischiefs such writings will do to your souls! It is with a view of assisting you to distrust them, that I *republish* the account of one of the Congregational Assemblies of your fathers. It was apparently collected by a faithful hand, while the ministers of God were speaking, and I restore it to you such as it was then printed, having only changed some modes of expression, which their ancient phraseology rendered obscure or unpolished. Read it, not lightly, but seriously, comparing it with the Word of the Lord. Is this too much to ask of you? Read it, not desiring to find in it elegance or the rapidity of modern style, but seeking truth in it. Bear therefore with unstudied language, that you may attach yourselves to the reality and the piety of the proofs and the thoughts.



The Bereans, we read, (Acts xvii. 11.) compared the teaching of the apostles themselves with the book of God; and only received it after having found it agreeable to that.— Cannot you do as much? When the question turns upon your earthly country, you are a people full of intelligence and jealous of your privileges.— Will you cease to be so, when the question relates to an eternal country, even a heavenly? If the question regarded the code of our laws, or the compact of the confederation, would you suffer yourselves to be led by a demagogue? And when the question concerns the heavenly code and the fellowship of the people of God, shall it be said, that the voice of a single individual shall seduce you and lead you blindfold?

Genevèse! have you no longer any Bibles in your houses, that you know so little of what that book teaches! Are you really resolved, my dear fellow-countrymen, to abandon for ever the faith which gave freedom to Geneva in 1535, founded the republic \* \* \* \* and which alone will save your souls!

I adjure you, at length, seek again for truth. Return, return loyally to the faith of your fathers!

C. MALAN, D. D.

Minister of the Holy Gospel.

*Geneva, March, 1835.*

*To the believing Reader, Greeting!*

It is a common saying, that out of evil springs good. The greater part of those who use this phrase, understand not the source of this common sentence. For they take the words as they stand; and consider not that the good which succeeds to the evil, springs from any other source than the evil; as if forsooth evil could of itself change into a good.

It is only the believer who can truly interpret this; he perceives that such is the goodness and power of God exerted on behalf of his people, that He causes what tends of its own nature to introduce ruin and confusion, to be changed in their case into a result altogether contrary; and that some advantage and profit is derived from it by the overruling of Him who can bring light out of darkness.

A turbulent fellow, thinking by what means he might best bring himself into notice, rashly



thrust himself into the Church of Geneva, to introduce thither a poison which he had imported from Italy. He would never have dared to attempt such a scheme, had he not been countenanced by some ill-disposed persons, who would willingly be employed in overthrowing all ecclesiastical discipline and order.

He had a fair and ample field, and had he gained the end at which he aimed, he would already have rendered men the hardy despisers of God, and put a charter into the hand of every one to do what seemed good in his sight.

For reversing the order of the predestination or election of God, and placing it after faith: he made faith to be in the power of every one, and thus each bestowing faith on himself, none could feel any difficulty in obtaining his salvation even though his life were filled with impieties and all uncleanness.

He had already gathered accomplices, and though the error of his doctrine was so manifest, that even children might perceive it,

nevertheless as this dogma seems plausible to unrenewed nature, it was without difficulty embraced by those who would gladly banish to a distance all fear of God, and uprightness of life.

Now observe in what respect this evil has been productive of good: it is in its having given occasion to some to illustrate the article of predestination, alike necessary to be believed, and salutary when believed. For it has stirred up the minister of the Church of Geneva to treat this subject on a Friday, (according to the rule which they observe of holding their congregation on this day) and to give an exposition of this article; of which Master John Calvin gave an explanation; so brief, and yet in its brevity so clear; that to add to it would only be repetition, or at most, expansion; and to subtract any thing from it would be to maim it. What the other brethren and ministers said afterwards, was only a simple confirmation of that which preceded.

See then how this fine speaker, hoping to throw all into confusion, has nevertheless

been the occasion of a great good, which never entered his thoughts; and remark how the evil he was daring enough to introduce, has yet been productive of advantage.

If this benefit which has thence arisen, has not been offered to you sooner, be not slack notwithstanding in receiving it; for this doctrine alike excellent and full of consolation is at the present time, to say the least of it as necessary as ever, since in the present day it has not fewer enemies than it had of you. God be with you.

*Congregation holden in the Church of Geneva, in which the subject of God's election was handled.*

The prayer which the ministers are accustomed to offer at the commencement of the congregation.

Let us invoke our good God and Father, beseeching him that he would vouchsafe to pardon all our faults and transgressions, and to enlighten us with his Holy Spirit, that we may possess the true understanding of his holy Word, granting us grace to handle it with sincerity and faithfulness, to the glory of his Holy Name—to the edification of His Church—and to our salvation. All which we beg in the name of his only and well-beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

After which Master John Calvin began, and spoke as follows :

Since we are shortly to receive the holy Supper, and it is impossible that we can receive it as we ought, except we possess a true



unity of faith to bind us together; and inasmuch as lately Satan has endeavoured to sow divisions among us, as you are aware we unanimously judged it fitting and useful to treat of the election of God by which we have been chosen; in order that this subject may be so understood by both old and young that we may have peace and repose in our consciences.

To discuss the matter (fully) would take up too much time. I must then as much as possible study brevity, omitting many things which might be said, since time would not permit that the whole should be fully drawn out. But I will endeavour (by God's grace) to give such a summary that all may retain it, and that there may be no one however rude or ignorant who shall be able to excuse himself by saying, that he never understood it. And afterwards, at the close, if any one have any doubt or scruple, he can propose it, that all may be better explained and proved by Holy Scripture.

Now the point from whence we must start, is this, that when we believe in Jesus Christ,

this comes not to us of our own wit; nor can we have a mind so lofty or so acute, as to comprehend the heavenly wisdom contained in the Gospel; but that these things come from the grace of God, a grace which exceeds our natural powers. It remains then that we enquire if this grace is common to all or no. Now Holy Scripture answers in the negative, declaring that God gives the Holy Spirit to whomsoever it seems good to him, and that he enlightens them in his Son. Experience shows this, and we are convinced of it. We must conclude then that faith proceeds from a source more lofty and more concealed still: I mean the gratuitous election of God, by which he chooses to salvation whomsoever he will.

This point is treated of by St. Paul in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, where he blessed God, not only that we believe, or because God has given us Jesus Christ on whom to believe, and possess in him the perfection and accomplishment of our salvation; but he says: "Blessed be God who

hath called and enlightened us, according as he hath chosen us before the foundation of the world." Eph. xiv. Thus then we see how the grace of God will be fully known by us; I mean when we are not only persuaded and certain that he has given us faith; but also that this is the result of his having chosen us before the creation of the world by his will.

Nor does St. Paul content himself with this declaration, but he adds also that he hath chosen us according to that purpose of his, which he had deliberated with himself! (Eph. v. 9.) Let us weigh well these words. For when St. Paul speaks of the purpose of God, he places it in opposition to any thing in man, by which it might be said that he had been induced (to choose a man). What is the meaning of the word *purpose*? Is it not what was the counsel of God in this matter? As when he says that God had called us with an holy calling (in the Ep. to Titus,) not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace; that is, according to his gratuitous purpose.

We remark here a comparison made by St. Paul between two opposite things; man's work, on the one hand, and the purpose of God on the other. So then in this word which we hear from St. Paul's mouth, let us understand a counsel which God took when he chose us to himself; not however with any view to any thing in us, as if it should be said that he was induced or moved by that as a motive to give us grace (a nous bienfaire).

It is true that God has respect to us in electing us, but what does he discover? Nothing but utter misery and poverty, by which he is moved to compassion. And yet though he finds this misery in all men universally, he has mercy upon whom he will. But why? We know nothing of the reason. For the present, let what we can understand suffice us; that is to say, what St. Paul declares, that God chose us according to the purpose he had deliberated in himself, for thus he wished to set aside all the objections that might be stated against it by saying, if such be the case, then God is unjust. When



he says, that God deliberated himself this purpose, that means, that he went not beyond himself, that he cast his eyes neither to the right nor to the left when he said, (pour dire) I will be moved to the performance of that.

Moreover he says, that he has chosen us in Christ Jesus, signifying thereby, that in ourselves we are unworthy, as it is in truth: and they who confess it not are greatly blinded by self-sufficiency (*abusés d'outrecuidance*) when they think that there is any good thing in them, by which God was moved to call them to Himself. This is the reason why he adds, that he has adopted us in his well-beloved Son. Nor is it without a reason that he attributes to our Lord Jesus Christ that he is the well-beloved Son. In ourselves we are hated, and worthy to be abhorred by God; but he looks upon us in his Son, and then he loves us. Besides, that we might know that faith is subordinate, (*en degré inférieur*) and that it depends upon the election of God, St. Paul pointedly adds, that it is "in order that we might be holy, and without spot." Now

we must remember, what St. Peter says in Acts xv. 19. that God purifies men's hearts by faith. Thus then when St. Paul says in this passage that we have been chosen of God to be holy, and without spot; he comprehends faith under that expression. For it is, as if he said, that in ourselves we are full of corruption, and that unbelief is a part of that corruption; as it is said that the unbelieving have their thoughts corrupted and defiled before God.

What must be done then? We must come to this gratuitous election of God, if we would have one grain or drop of purity. Thus therefore we see that faith springs solely from the election of God, that is, that God enlightens those whom he has chosen before the creation of the world, by his free mercy.

This is what he says likewise in the Epistle to the Romans. He sets this sentence in the foreground, that God turns every thing into good for those whom he loves. (Rom. viii. 27.) Afterwards he adds a correction that men might not think that they disposed themselves

to salvation, and acquired such a benefit by their virtue, "that is, to those who are called according to the purpose of God," as if he should say; The fact is, that every thing will be changed into our woe and ruin, if we love not God. And this love of God must be in us, if we wish that every thing should favour us; but let us not think that the commencement lies with us, for God must go before us.

And since this is the case, Who are they that love God? Those who are called by him according to his purpose. He again brings us back to this word whose meaning has been explained—that is, to the immovable counsel of God, which goes not (for its motive) beyond himself, but takes from his good pleasure the reason why he does this or that. This, then, is the way in which this election of those who are called according to the purpose of God (which St. Paul is explaining), must be understood.

Here especially he speaks of the purpose of God:—for what reason? That we might know

that it is a certain calling, which takes place with efficacy and power. For God will indeed call the unbelieving; but this calling suffices not to convert them. He touches not their heart to the quick; he gives not such a virtue to his word, that it dwells in them. But when he calls us according to his purpose, when he converts us to himself, it is inasmuch as he has elected us; as he adds afterwards, those whom he foreknew, them he elected, them he called; those whom he called, he justified. St. Paul here lays down several steps, but the foundation begins by this; namely, that God knows his own. And how does he know them?

True it is, that certain calumniators (of God) will say, that he knew whom he would elect, because he foresaw in them that they would be faithful to him, and make a good use of his favours. But that were too silly a mockery of God: for what is spoken of here is a knowledge such as he explains afterwards. We need no other expositor (herein) than St. Paul, who declares his intention; and we have



no need to search for a comment elsewhere. For he says, that God has not cast off his people whom he had known. And how known? Does it mean that he found his people worthy of such a favor? On the contrary, he says that the remnant of that great multitude shall be saved according to the election of grace. This (election) is the same as that spoken of by St. Peter in the Acts, when he says, that Christ has been announced "according to the foreknowledge of God," and this foreknowledge implies deliberation.

In a word, St. Paul, in saying that God has elected those whom he has known, does not mean to say any thing else than what he said to the Galatians, (chap. iv. 9,) "After that ye have known God, or rather after that ye have been known by him." St. Paul attributes it to men, that they know God by faith; but that men might understand that this (faith) does not proceed from them, he qualifies it by saying, 'or rather have been known by him,' as if he had said, you have not come to God, except inasmuch as he has drawn near to you.

As also it is said by the prophet Isaiah lxxv. 1, "I have been found of those that sought me not; I have appeared to those that enquired not for me; and to those that were afar off, I have said, "Behold me, Behold me." Thus then we see how the elect are known of God, and how he chooses those whom he has known; that is to say, he marks them as his possession, saying, You are my people. Now these who are known of God, are called by him; and this election takes place when God gives us faith.

We see then how this proposition which I have already maintained, is now fully confirmed; viz., that God, perceiving the whole human race to be in a state of ruin and perdition, withdraws from it those whom he will, and moreover in withdrawing them from it, he calls them to himself. For this is the means (whereby he effects it). But yet (mais tellement) so, that this election must precede, and faith follow in its own rank.

He then who has been desirous to trouble this Church, shows great impudence, com-

bined with stupidity, when he is not ashamed to say that the first chapter to the Ephesians must only be understood of St. Paul and the Apostles. When St. Paul says, God hath chosen us before the creation of the world (he has esteemed us agreeable) in his well-beloved Son, to choose us into (the privileges of) adoption, that we might be his children. "Oh as for that, (says he,) it means nothing else than that God elected the apostles, that they might preach the Gospel." So then, there are none but the apostles who are children of God, who are adopted by him. They are the only ones who are loved by God. An excellent theology this for dragging the whole world to hell! Thus we see that such characters are mockers of God, and dogs that bark to overthrow and abolish all reason. What then is to be done? Weigh well what has been already said in order to know which is St. Paul's meaning, which is neither obscure nor doubtful. And for more ample confirmation, let us come to what we have already seen in St. John, where it is said in the sixth chap-

ter, "That none can come to Jesus Christ, except the Father draw him." (John vi. 44.) Now let us see whether this drawing takes place in the case of every one. True is it, that God presents his word to all, and that by it, he invites all indifferently to listen to it; but he does not speak to all in their hearts: as is also noticed in the same place, "He that hath heard and learned of my Father, will come to me." (John vi. 45.) I ask then, Do all come to Jesus Christ? We have the evidence of fact to the contrary. If all then do not come to Jesus Christ, it follows that all have not been taught by the Father; for he says that all those that have been taught by the Father, will come to him. Here then is a passage explicit enough and easy of comprehension. And our Lord Jesus alleges as proof, what is written in the Book of Isaiah, "That all the children of the Church shall be taught of God." Now since it says that all the children of the Church shall be taught of God, there is no doubt that he is speaking of an especial blessing which he grants to those



who are called to his flock. And it is impudence too gross to tell us, as does this scatterbrain, that what is there said is a general promise.

As also when God says, by the mouth of Ezekiel, "I will lead you in the way of my commandments." (Ch. xxxvii.) That is (says he,) a universal promise which belongs as much to Turks as to Christians. Afterwards when he says, "I will make a new covenant with you; I will give you an heart of flesh;" That is promised to every body. When it is said, "I will write my law on their hearts;" It is promised to all without exception. Is not this in truth to mock God and his Word, since we see that God is speaking of a different alliance from that which he formed with his ancient people. He says, "This covenant shall not be any more like that which I made with your fathers; for they transgressed it." And with men it cannot have any other result, than that they will immediately become disloyal to God, and separate from him. If then God would have a firm and enduring covenant

with us, he must write his laws on our hearts. And does he do this to men in general? We see as I said at first, evidently the very contrary.

We must conclude, therefore, that this arises not from our own virtue, or merit, or worthiness, but from the mere grace of God. We see that all have not the law written on their hearts: that the heart of stone remains in the majority of men, in whom we observe hopeless obduracy. Let us observe then, that this promise is special, and that good works only in those who belong to his family.

Besides our Lord Jesus removes from us every difficulty. For when he adduces the passage of Isaiah, is it to tell us that God will teach all men? Just the reverse; for he says, that therein is accomplished that which was spoken by the prophet. What was then the meaning of Jesus Christ, when he saw the blindness of those who thought themselves great teachers, who rejected all that he taught them, and when he perceived that the heads of the Church received him not, he said, Be

not astonished if there be so many rebellious and obstinate; for to all it is not given to believe. "My Father must draw those that come to me." And this is what he says, that all whom the Father hath given him shall come to him: and that all that come to him he will keep; and will not suffer any to perish. Here then are three points worthy of notice.

One is that when we come to Jesus Christ, we are given to him as his heritage by God the Father. It belongs not to us that we give ourselves to him, but it is the Father who must make him this gift. Whence we conclude that election is prior to faith. For the Father gives to the Son what he possesses already as his own; that is to say that though all be his creatures, yet all are not of his flock; but that he has his people whom he has chosen as it hath pleased him. He had then elected all those whom he gave to Jesus Christ.

And thence also the second point results; that Jesus Christ takes into his care and protection

those who are given to him by his Father: and will not suffer that any should perish; that when we are once under his defence, he will grant us such grace that we shall endure to the end, as we have also clearly seen in the 10th chap. of St. John, where he says, none shall pluck from him the sheep that are committed to his care. Now why shall none pluck them away? The Father (saith he) who has given them me is greater than all. John x. 29. This point we ought well to consider to enable us to resist the numerous attacks that Satan makes in order to drive us from it. For otherwise, when we are assailed on all sides, and have ten thousand deaths around us, where will be our strength and power to resist? But (this is our anchor) God is invincible. Let us be assured then, that our salvation is certain. And why so? Because it is in the hand of God. But how are we certain of it? Because he has put it in the hand of our Lord Jesus, who manifests to us that the Father hath chosen us, and will carry on his counsel to full effect and perfection.



Moreover our Lord Jesus shows us also clearly what has been already stated several times, and which must not be allowed to slip from the memory, that God makes us his sheep because he has elected us; and afterward calls us to his flock; that the means whereby he calls us is faith; and then we are manifested and declared to be his sheep. For the calling spoken of by Holy Scripture is nothing else than the testimony which God gives of his counsel which before was secret; as will soon be more fully discussed. So that we are the sheep of Jesus Christ before we know him; afterwards he calls us to him, and then we begin to hear his voice.

What St. Paul observes in the 1st of Romans on the point, is still clearer. For there an absolute declaration (to that effect,) is made, and such that nothing can be said against it. Every thing that is told us of it is manifest. It is true that Satan has always set himself to cavil and invent many frivolous subtleties, to obscure what is there said; but truth is always triumphant. St. Paul shows,

that though God had chosen the children of Abraham for his heritage, nevertheless not all those who are descended from Abraham according to the flesh, "are the children of the promise," that is they are not contained or comprised in the election of God, so as to be truly heirs of God and of his kingdom. As if now it should be said, that Jesus Christ has been ordained King of the whole world, that all may come and pay him homage: as it is written in so many passages of the Prophets, and especially in Psalm ii. which I adduce as the most notorious and common, "Ask of me and I shall give thee the ends of the world for thine heritage." From the rising to the setting sun thou shalt be worshipped by kings and princes, *i. e.* then know all the world is called to salvation, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; but that is not nevertheless the same as to say that all are in truth heirs of the promise. And why? St. Paul might well allege that all believed not, and he did it not from forgetfulness; but he leaves unsaid that it hap-

pens thus, because God elects whom he will.

Now my brethren, observe we well this point. First, let us notice who is the speaker. It is St. Paul, who protests in another passage, (2 Cor. xii.) that he was raised to the third heaven; that he saw mysteries of God which man may not declare. Does not St. Paul then know what measure is to be observed in revealing the mysteries of God? for he says, that he is not permitted to reveal certain mysteries which he saw on high. It follows therefore that this mystery may be revealed to men; or else he would have been cautious of bringing it forward: besides he never would have disclosed it so boldly as he has done. For in this place of deliberate purpose, without any urgent necessity, he enters into this decree of Election, and desires that we should be taught up to that point that we might know what proposition it is that he advances: viz. Two children in the womb of one mother, begotten of the same father, that is the patriarch Isaac. They have both the promise

which had been externally preached; they are born in the same family who were the people and sanctuary of God, the head of the Church. And yet he says while the mother carries them in the womb, "the elder shall serve the younger." Now hereupon those that desire to cavil, say that that means an earthly blessing. Be it so; this is to despise the Holy Spirit who speaks by the mouth of St. Paul. Is St. Paul speaking there of the one that was to be most at his ease in the world, who was to have *white bread*? Is he speaking of delicacies and such like things? To say so is mockery. He is there treating of the eternal salvation of all souls.

They only make that assertion then to wrest Holy Writ.

We see therefore that such an interpretation as these scorners of God would give, is nothing but pure folly; and even a barefaced act of malice. For it is there spoken of persons being inheritors of the Covenant which is entirely spiritual, that is, of the alliance which God made with Abraham when he said



to him, "I will be thy God and the God of thy seed after thee." What does that mean? It is to say, Thou shalt live in my kingdom for ever, as Jesus Christ also gives us the interpretation of it.

It is not without reason that St. Paul says, Isaac, had two sons, conceived at once by his wife Rebecca," and that the one was preferred to the other; whereupon he cites the testimony of the prophet Malachi. It is true, that in Malachi, mention is made of the land of Canaan and Mount Seir. But was not the land of Canaan a figure and image of the heavenly inheritance? St. Paul then represents to us, as in a mirror, that God hath chosen Jacob, and preferred him to his brother Esau. Jacob, I say, who was the younger, was preferred to the elder, and was set above Esau, that men might not attribute any thing to the order, (of nature) but to that Eternal Counsel of which we now speak. St. Paul not only says that, but he says, "Before they had done either good or evil," that God spoke this to declare that he had elected Jacob and

appointed him for an heritage; and that he had given up Esau; before (said he) they had done good or evil; and that in order that men might know that this thing proceeded from the part of God who calls, and not from the part of men.

The papist theologians have a distinction current amongst themselves; That God does not elect men according to the works which are in them, but that he chooses those whom he foresees will be believers. And therein they contradict what we have already alleged from St. Paul, for he says, that we are chosen and elected in him, "that we might be holy and without blame before his face." St. Paul must needs have spoken otherwise, if God had elected us having foreseen that we should be holy. But he has not used such language: he says, "He hath elected us that we might be holy." He infers therefore that the latter, (*i. e.* faith) depends upon the former, (*i. e.* election).

Those who think otherwise know not what man and human nature is. Let us notice then

a little what is in our nature, and what may be drawn from it, when God shall have left it to itself. Now it is certain that we are so corrupt and depraved that we can only do evil. True, it is well said, that to those who love God, all things shall turn to their good; but he declares several times in the same chapter, that all the powers of our nature are so many enemies against God. Thus then what does God foresee in men if he leaves them as they are? What will he find in us, save all filthiness and abomination, what can he become, but our mortal enemy; what can he do but cast us headlong to the depths of hell? This is what God may foresee. So then when he foresees good, it is because he determines to put it there, he foresees there nothing but his gifts and graces. Who then may take pride to himself? Who may lift up himself? and say, I am somebody!

Let these remarks suffice for this point, and pass we on to another passage which St. Paul utters, "Who art thou that puttest a difference (between thyself and others?) And

who maketh thee more excellent?" St. Paul, here shows two things; First, That though we be all of one and the same condition and nature, yet we are separated one from another, and, Secondly, That this difference comes from God: for the word implies that "To put a difference between," signifies, to render more excellent. And thus he proves that there is nothing of our own in that; that we are not beforehand with God; that we do not draw nigh to him; but that on the contrary he it is who does all, and that it is to him that we must attribute all. Thus then we perceive what is St. Paul's meaning in Rom. chap. ix. when he infers that Esau was rejected and that Jacob was elected; that this arose not from their works but as he says, "from God who calleth."

And this we must consequently infer, "that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy;" that is to say that men may not exalt themselves in this matter to rob God of his glory, nor to attribute to themselves any part of their



salvation : for all he asserts, springs from the mercy of God. There are some who wrest this passage, and say, that those words " It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth," mean only, that our running would not be sufficient for our salvation, except God help us therein by his mercy. A correct explanation truly ! If it were so, one might say just the reverse. For if there were a co-operation between God and man, that is if God did one half and we the other, we must then conclude, that it was not of us altogether, but partly of God ; and also that it was not of God altogether, but of us in part ; and thus we should make God subject to us : an execrable blasphemy, and one which there is no man, bad as he may be, who would not abhor. As St. Augustine also explains it, St. Paul speaking in this passage of him that willeth and of him that runneth, does not attribute to us, either such a will or such a power, that we can do any thing of ourselves ; but he shows that man is as it were a captive, and that he has no power whatever, but that

what he has proceeds from the grace of God, who stretches out his hand to draw us to himself, even at the time when we were afar off banished and utterly cast aside." (*rejetés*)

And thus you perceive the proposition that I laid down sufficiently confirmed by Holy Writ, which was to this effect. That God hath chosen us not only before we knew him, but before we were born, and before the world was created ; that he has chosen us by his gratuitous favor, and that he has not sought the reason elsewhere ; that he deliberated this plan in himself, and that we ought to know that, that he may be glorified by us, as is fitting.

Now the glory which is due to God cannot be rendered to him without this, as we are taught in 2 Thess. ii. " We must always give thanks to God, (says the apostle) who hath chosen us before the foundation of the world, in spirit and in sanctification. Why does St. Paul give thanks to God ? He gives thanks not only for their faith, but for God's election of us. And afterwards he adds, that

God has chosen them to sanctify them by his Holy Spirit, and has led them to the knowledge of faith. As also we have already observed in this passage of the Ephesians which is in entire accordance with it.

Still there are objections to the contrary; for we know how great is man's obstinacy; and there is no one, who does not experience in himself that it is very difficult to tame our spirits, so as to receive in quietness and humility all that is declared to us. His heart must be very upright with God before he arrives at such a due regulation of himself. This is the reason why St. James exhorts us us to receive the word of God which is preached to us with meekness, with a gentle spirit. We must not then be surprised if men set themselves up against this doctrine, and if there be many contradictions. But by all means let the children of God receive what they know to have proceeded from his mouth, without any contradiction saying, We must keep to that for God hath spoken it.

In effect, see how God intends to try our

humility. It is true that all the doctrine of the Scriptures tends that way; but yet there is no doctrine so fit to humble men as this, that we are sure God chose us by his free favor, even as it hath pleased him. Wherefore these objections that are made must be repelled by the authority of God; I mean what power and pre-eminence He ought to possess over us. When we have no weapon but this, it is enough to bend down the pride of those who cavil at this doctrine so well established in Scripture. And it is also sufficient to repel all evil fancies which the devil (as the saying is) may whisper in our ear.

I will begin with those which seem to be modest. And in truth, one may easily find men fearing God, who sometimes may have some scruple or some doubt of mind; but yet they are not so well trained to obey God, as not to have some latent pride within; and God must discover to them the hypocrisy they possessed till now. For those who say, 'Observe, I am afraid of making God unjust, when I say he has chosen those whom he



would : they have not known the evil which is concealed in them.' When they say, 'I am afraid of accusing God of cruelty, if I say that he does not choose all men generally,' we may answer, 'My friend, thou shewest thereby that thou hast pride in thy heart, that thou hast not yet known the hypocrisy that is in thee.'

But to the proof. Let us notice what St. Paul says in Romans xiv. where he tells us that we may not judge one another, unless we be taught by God. He is there speaking not of sins which are already condemned, and respecting which we have God's own decision, but of things indifferent; in these we must not judge one another. "For we must, (says he,) stand before the judgment seat of God." We are brethren, and for that reason alone, we must not presume to distribute reward and punishment, saying, 'This man will fall, for he acts sinfully;' 'This other will be lifted up again, because I say his actions are good.' No, no; our Lord Jesus Christ must judge us; and as it is he who humbles us, suffer him also to raise

us again, since the power has been given him by God his Father.

If St. Paul would not have us take upon ourselves to judge each other, let us consider I pray you, when we think of setting ourselves up against God, that we do not desire that he should be acknowledged just, (at least that we should not acknowledge him such) except in so far as the reason of his proceedings is apparent. Now where is the argument here? And yet such is the case of those who say, I fear lest God should be unjust if he were to do that. Thou fearest lest God should be unjust, unless God subject himself to thee! unless thou controllest him! unless thou hearest the reason why he does this or that, just as if he were thy inferior! How arrogant is such conduct? And yet many see not this fault in themselves, but (to perceive it) we must look to the root of the matter within.

Nor is there any need of introducing here, our frivolous questions, by saying, 'I know not whether God be just or no, let him show me how and why it is so.'—but since we know

not his counsel, since we have not a spirit lofty enough to arrive at such a height as to be able to discover his reasons for doing all things, we must humbly travel onward until the day when "The book shall be opened," as it is written in Daniel. Then says Scripture, We shall see, what we now conceive by faith; Why God chose Jacob; why he rejected Esau, and why he thus disposes of men; we shall perceive I say, the reason of his deeds. But even let us content ourselves (with the reflection) that God is just, and let us know also that he is the source of all wisdom, equity, and rectitude. But let us notice also on the other hand, of what nature is this reason.

Some suppose that St. Paul was in want of an answer, when he said, "O man, who art thou that canst raise thyself against God." But that is the best answer which can be given. And let us not by any means suppose that God cannot give us satisfaction, and that he cannot when called upon to answer and discover the matter, reply, 'This is the reason why I did this or that.' But in the first case,

let us suppose, that God were willing to submit to us, so that he were before us as before a judge, to apologize for himself—You object to this, do you? This is the reason why I did it. If God were willing to submit himself, as it were to give us an account of all that he does, let us observe a moment, if we could comprehend the glory of God and his inherent Majesty so as to endure it. Far from it, we must be overwhelmed by it, when we advanced to so profligate a boldness. Let us learn then what our capacity is, that we are so gross and ignorant, that we cannot understand what God has determined to conceal from us. But nevertheless let us firmly hold, that God has just reasons for doing as he does, although those reasons be concealed from us, and that the things which we know not exist notwithstanding.

For we see not as yet face to face. We see therefore not by the eye as St. Paul observes in another passage; in short, we shall never comprehend this mystery and this secret so lofty and excellent, save by having the humility



to say, 'Well, we see not the reason why God deals thus, yet we have enough to persuade us that he is just, and therefrom to profit always by the knowledge of his will.

Now with regard to those who say, that we may as well omit this doctrine, and that we may preach faith and repentance, without saying that there are any elected of God, such persons set themselves up as wiser than God himself: true it is that we must be sober, as I have just said, and we cannot exercise moderation too much, that we go not beyond our limits, as God has commanded us. But whence shall we take the standard of this sobriety? From our own wisdom, or from God himself? It is undoubted that God knows how much it is expedient for us to know.

Now since he declares to us, what we have already reviewed, it is right that we should know it, but there is no necessity that we should go beyond it. As soon as God has broken up the road we must stop there at once. And thus let us know that it belongs to God to declare to us, what he wishes to be

known and manifest; and to us it belongs, to receive it with all humility, and so to enquire no farther.

Proceed we now to the objections made by those who with open mouth blaspheme God. Some say, 'If it be true, that God has elected those that seem good to him there is no need for us to believe that we ought to strive to live holy lives; for the election of God guarantees every thing.' Such swine (Matt. vii. 6.) do nothing but grunt, and yet what will they profit? For here is the passage of Holy Scripture which give a brief solution to this, viz., that "we are called with a holy calling," that no longer following our own uncleanness, we may be holy and without spot. Their objection then, is as if a person should wish to separate light from the sun, and should say, "it is enough for us to have a sun, there is no need of light." But take away the light of the sun, and of what use would it be?

So is it with the election of God. Let us not then separate what he has joined. For when he has elected us, it is to this end that

“we should be holy.” Those whom he has elected, he has separated from the unbelieving, that they may no more be encompassed with their pollutions, and their abominations.

It is then too foolish an objection to say, If God has elected us, men must slacken the rein, and suffer themselves to wander as they will. Now the reverse is the fact, for those who say, ‘Oh if we be elect, it follows that we cannot hurt ourselves, for we cannot be lost,’ such persons I say, cannot give a stronger proof of their reprobation than this; for such as God has elected, he governs by his Holy Spirit. What then does the election of God imply? It is that we are adopted for his children, and that since he has chosen us, he gives us the Spirit of adoption to govern us, as it is written in the first chapter of St. John.

Proceed we then to the principal blasphemy which some put forth. ‘Oh if it be true that God elects such as he thinks fit, and rejects others, he is unjust.’ For these speak not as those whom I have just mentioned, who fear, lest (by admitting election) God should be

unjust; for by so doing they desire to honour him, though they know not the right method of honouring God.

In the first, Satan has gained a hearing, (*les premiers sont déjà préoccupés par Satan,*) the last are entirely possessed by him. Nevertheless both the one and the other, set themselves up against God. What then will be the fate of such persons? It is as if I should throw a stone above my head—whither then will it fall back? When we cast stones one at another, we can keep ourselves from being struck, but when we speak against God, to whose door shall we lay the blame? And when we wish to let off an arquebuss, to hurl a dart, or to fire an arrow, or any thing else above our head, must it not fall back again upon us, and must we not be smitten with it? So then let us fear to fall into such a conclusion, and learn only to adore the majesty of God, and to hold it as a settled principle, that every thing that happens is wisely ordained though we see not why. This is what St.



Paul shows, that we must not be wiser than the Spirit of God.

There are some that esteem it strange, that we do not offer them an easy solution, and they say, 'I wish these things were clearly explained, so that I might perceive why this thing be done.' My friend, you must go and seek another school, since you are so presumptuous, that you will not give glory to God, unless you see the material proofs. Go then seek another school than that of the Holy Spirit. We observe how St. Paul speaks, "Who art thou Oh man?" If any one would plead against us, on a point which does not concern him, let him lay the blame on God. For if we would pass beyond what he has declared in his word, we should not be good disciples in his school. St. Paul then shows how we should conduct ourselves in this affair, what bounds we ought to keep, that is, that man must be held in with a tight rein, and that we ought to know our low condition.

Take a like case. We naturally expect the

preference above the brute beasts. If an ass or a dog could speak, and should say, 'Why am I not a man?' every one of us would make answer, 'Since it pleased God to make you a beast, ought you not to be contented with that.' And what are we in comparison of God? It is certain that we are as inferior to him, as the brute beast to us; and why then should he not have as much authority over us, as we would have over the creatures? What remains then? Let those who blaspheme thus, look at the example which St. Augustine cites, at the second passage, where he speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ. "For in truth, Jesus Christ is the mirror and the pattern in which God has manifested the infinite treasures of his bounty, for he is the head of the Church; so that we must begin with him if we would know how God operates on his inferior members."

Behold then, Jesus Christ, very God and very man. Now this human nature has been exalted to a marvellous dignity; for Jesus Christ being God and man, is nevertheless Son of God; I say his only Son:—his Son by

nature. What is it that the human nature of Christ has merited? For it proceeds from the race of Adam: it must spring from the seed of David, else would he not have been our Saviour. He was conceived by his mother, in a marvellous manner, yet so that he descended from the race of David, Abraham and Adam.

That he was sanctified and was not subjected to the same corruption that we are, arose from the admirable and excellent grace of God. But at all events if we consider the human nature of Jesus Christ, it has not deserved to be exalted to such a degree of honour as that it should be said, "This is he who shall have dominion over angels, before whom every knee shall bow."

When we consider such mercy of God shown towards our Head, ought not each to retire within himself to know and say. God hath chosen me, me who was banished and rejected from his kingdom! I professed nothing which could be agreeable to him, and yet he has chosen me to be of the number of his

people! "Ought we not then to know such a mercy, in order to magnify it? When then we shall come to behold that, we shall cry with St. Paul, "Oh the depth!" Which shew us that we shall not be true disciples of the Holy Ghost, until we have been lost in admiration. When we think on the secrets of God, let us confess that we are not yet capable of comprehending them.

We must now come to the case of the reprobate: for in like manner as God has elected some, he has also rejected such as seemed good to him; the one implies the other, for when there is a choice, it supposes that all are not elected, but a part only. Now with regard to the reprobate, it is true that we may esteem it strange that God rejects them, since they are his creatures. But we must reflect what we are in Adam, and what we derive from him. We are in him all lost or damned. If God were to reject us all from first to last, we should have no plea to urge against him: for if he exacted justice, (*nous faisait droit*) we should deserve to be cast to hell.



Now if God has chosen some, and nevertheless the others are rejected, is our eye to be evil, while he exercises an authority which belongs to him! As it is shown us in the parable which our Lord brings forward when he says, "If I be kind and liberal, is thine eye envious?" Now he is there speaking of those who murmured because the master gave no more to those who had endured all the labour; than to those who had not laboured at all. And how then, says he, is it not allowable for me to do with my own what I will?" If then men have such authority as to be able to dispose of their goods, at their pleasure, shall God be subject to a stricter law than men? Would that not be bringing him too much into subjection? Let us observe then, that we are all lost in Adam, that we are all ruined, and that nevertheless if out of that number God call some, after having elected them, that springs from a special favour which he exercises towards them, and that he must have liberty so to do, without any one daring to murmur against him.

But, it will be said, 'When God created

Adam, did he not foresee what would occur? and did he not dispose it according to his will.' Yes truly, it cannot be denied. But man was created just and good and upright in his nature; and if he has stumbled and fallen, if he has committed so great a transgression (as he has), that comes from *him* and cannot be attributed to God. 'Well, but if God had not decreed it, it would not have been so. God might have easily provided for that exigency.'

'How then did he permit that it should so happen?' 'Could he not have remedied it?' Yes, but let us beware of murmuring against our Judge, and let us know, that what he has ordained in his counsels from all time is hidden from us, and that we cannot conceive it. And at all events, let us remember what is said in Holy Scripture; that the counsels and decrees of God are a great deep. Where then is the use of casting ourselves therein? If we saw an abyss before us, who would precipitate himself into it?

What remains then for us to do, save to

adore his justice in all his works? See how we must do it. And it is to this point that St. Paul leads us, when he says, that some of his day murmured thus against God, or at least, alleged the arguments which these blasphemers would put forth, "Why then does God find fault?" Rom. ix. 19. that is to say, Why does he complain, since we cannot resist his will? "Who art thou O man who liftest up thyself against God." St. Paul might have quoted all the reasons of the doctors of the Sorbonue, and the turbulent fellows who would in our day overthrow God's election. He might have said. "Oh, God has chosen those whom he foresaw would believe; to whom he distributed his grace, and he saw that they would receive it by their free will." But he says nothing of the kind; on the contrary, he concludes that it is not a point for us to enquire into, and yet he shows, that God gives grace, to such as seem good to him. Is this not then a sentence as notorious as possible, (*plus que notoire*). Let us then rest content with the testimonies of

Scripture, which have been quoted above, and let us confess, that even without that, all those who thus set themselves up against God, are already sufficiently convicted by themselves, and that it is not necessary to give them stronger proofs.

Certainly it is astonishing, that men should be so presumptuous as to say, 'O then, I cannot satisfy myself, unless they bring me a satisfactory argument.' Is there I pray you any more satisfactory proof than to say what we have said; than (to feel) what we feel within our heart. Even when one has long disputed, and proved these things to demonstration, is there a stronger proof than we have in our conscience? Certainly not. And now let each one examine himself, and he will find his condemnation engraved in his conscience; he will find that we are all guilty of death, and that when we have looked into ourselves closely, each must condemn himself. And how then shall we presently say, 'I do not see the reason of it.'

Such persons show that they have never



examined their consciences: that they flutter in the air; that they do not lay hold on the things which God shows us, with fear and reverence; but desire to exalt themselves without knowing what belongs to God or themselves. Now both these things must agree. If we wish to profit in the doctrine of the Gospel we must know what is our station, and what is God's; but such persons desire not to know any thing of this matter.

This is the point we must remember with regard to the reprobate, that God reprobates them inasmuch as they are not chosen and elected. And yet we must confess that God is just, although we cannot understand what is the reason of it. Moreover he is not bound to account to us for it. Let us then be contented to know that all his judgments take place with equity and uprightness, and that his justice will one day be known, when we shall see him face to face. Observe then, why St. Paul, citing the example of Pharaoh, says afterwards, that God to say the least, has as much authority over men as the potter over

the earth or the clay. And so when God makes us honourable vessels, let us reflect that it is of his pure goodness. Let us know that he would have the power to make us vessels of dishonour, and that when he does it, that springs of our own proper nature, and that he is under no obligation to do any thing further for us.

In conclusion then, to recapitulate what has been said respecting God's election, let us remark, that God is not magnified by us as he ought to be, and that we know not his grace such as he manifests it toward us, if we do not know that we are elected by him, and that he hath snatched us from the universal condemnation in which the whole race of Adam lies, and in order to lead us to our Lord Jesus Christ; that it is he alone who has bought us, and that when we look upon the reprobate, we should learn to see ourselves in their persons, as in a mirror, and to say, such should we be, if God had not exercised his paternal goodness in separating us from them. For we cannot

by nature exalt ourselves above others, but it is God who has made us more excellent. Until the believer has arrived at this point, never will he magnify God as he ought, as I have already said.

And now, I will explain briefly all the objections that might be brought against this doctrine not adducing *all* the arguments, but if I answer one or two that will suffice. In the first place it is said by St. Paul to Timothy, (in 1st Epistle, ch. ii.) that "God would have all men to be saved." Already he who has troubled the church on this topic has put forward this very question, which has been sufficiently answered (before) in a Congregation. I adduce this argument, because it is the foundation laid by this firebrand who desired to excite dissension in the church concerning this doctrine of God. See (says he) "God wishes that all should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." If God desires that all should come to the knowledge of the truth, why does he not send men to preach the Gospel to the Turks? Why does he

permit the world to be blinded for so great a length of time? And as St. Paul speaks of it in the Acts, ch. 10. saying how he suffered men to wander for so long a time. It follows then that St. Paul speaks not of *every* man, but of all *conditions* : \* just as he shows, when he says, that 'prayer should be made for kings, princes, and all that are settled in dignity.' They may say; But how shall we pray for the enemies of God? St. Paul says, that we must not limit the grace of God according to our fancy, for God is willing that all conditions should come to the knowledge of him. Is not this then a well cited passage to overthrow the election of God? But we must not wonder if such firebrands see not at all, inasmuch as they think to be very subtle and acute; for the devil dazzles their eyes. 2 Tim. ii. 26.

But moreover they still object, 'Yes, but has not God said, that he "desires not the death of a sinner, but rather that they should repent and live," Ezek. xviii. 32. that is to say, that by repenting he should live, as if God called all

\* There is no necessity for this interpretation. — ED



the world to conversion and repentance. Let us see then whether conversion is given to all. St. Paul declares to Timothy that it is not a common gift, where he says, "If peradventure God should give them repentance unto salvation. 2 Tim. ii. 25. Thereby he signifies, that God gives grace to whom he will. With regard to repentance when he says, 'that the sinner should repent and live,' that means, (as every one may see) that God invites every one to repentance, nevertheless, that promise is not general. As also the threats that God uttered concerning the Ninevites are conditional, 'If they repent, if they return, the evil that I have counselled against them shall not happen to them.'" That threat then was conditional. Thus when the prophet Ezekiel says, "I desire not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should repent and live;" (xiii. 11.) it is as if he said, God sends me to announce to each the promise of salvation, but you must convert yourselves. But this gift of conversion is not common to all. It is not in our power to convert ourselves

from our evil life, except God purify us by his Holy Spirit, as Holy Scripture abundantly declares respecting this doctrine. Whence it follows, that this promise is not made equally to all, although it addresses itself to all. And this wretch (*malheureux*) will ask why? in a spirit of ridicule, as if he had never read one word of Scripture!

But such impudence is worthy of such 'dogs,' (Phil. iii. 2.) when they undertake thus to encounter with God. Nevertheless they adduce likewise the objection. 'But is not the Gospel preached in all the world?' Certainly; but let us notice if all have been enlightened by God to receive this doctrine. Holy Scripture tells us just the contrary; and St. Paul gives us a solution of this, when he says, that the Gospel, is the power of God unto salvation to all believers. Rom. i. 16. Here is a promise which is certain, that is, for all believers. Notice we then who are believers; he discovers to us in the chap. x. when he says, "that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; but (says

he) all have not believed and obeyed; for Esaias says, "Who hath believed our report? To whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" St. Paul willing to adduce the reason why all believed not, says pointedly "the arm of the Lord is not revealed to all;" that is to say, that God exerts not his grace (*vertu*) to all. Is not this a sufficiently explicit declaration? What answer can be made to it? All believe not. Why? Because God exerts not his grace towards all.

This is what one reads so often in Holy Scripture, as when St. Luke says, in Acts chap. viii. that "God opened the heart of the woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple." God opened her heart that she might attend to the things which Paul spoke." Here then was a spiritual gift to this woman, when God spoke to her in her heart; Have we not also herein the general doctrine upon this point, such as is represented by St. Luke, when he says, "All those who were ordained to eternal life believed?" The Gospel by its very nature is truly the power of God to save all believers.

But from our enmity we can do nothing but reject the Gospel, except God enlighten us by calling us. As he says, that all believed; (that is) all that "were ordained to salvation."

Nevertheless learn we that we can only assure ourselves of salvation by faith. For if a man say, 'How am I to know if I be saved or damned?' He shows thereby that he has never known what is the faith and confidence that we ought to have in God through Jesus Christ. Would you then know whether you are elect? View yourself in Jesus Christ. For those who by faith have truly communion with Jesus Christ, may be well assured that they belong to the eternal election of God, and that they are his children. Whoever then finds himself in Jesus Christ and is a member of his body by faith, he is assured of salvation: and when we would know it, there is no need to mount up thither to enquire for that which must be hidden from us to this hour. But lo! God humbles himself to us: he shows us how this election is in his Son; as if he said, Here I am, contemplate me,



and know that I have adopted you as my children. When then we receive this witness of salvation which is brought us by the Gospel, thereby we know and are assured that God has elected us. And thus believers should not doubt their election, but esteem it as certain ; that since they are called to faith by the preaching of the Gospel, they are partakers of that grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the promise made in his name. For our Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation of these two things, the promises of salvation, and our gratuitous election, which has been made from the creation of the world. Thus we see, that all the passages which can be adduced, are irrelevant when adduced to overthrow God's election ; and that this doctrine must remain firm and certain.

We see too, that we must walk in fear and humility, without presuming to wish to enquire what God ordained before the creation of the world ; but let us only follow what is written in Holy Scripture, and keep the road we have already followed with regard to the

election of God: Nevertheless we ought also to recognise in general, that God so governs all things by his providence that his will is as it were the source of every thing. See then how we say that it causes a necessity in all things. Not that thereby we would enwrap God in our iniquities, or that it is possible so to do ; but that we must hold this doctrine as it is discovered to us in Holy Scripture ; that is, that God so disposes all things, that nothing evil is done on his part, for he is just ; and as for men, they pervert every thing good into iniquity ; and that their condemnation for all the evil they have done must rest upon their heads. And how so ? Now it were a tedious affair to unravel, to one who would do it at length, but we will say only a few words on the subject.

To God then, his will stands in the place of every reason, and this will is so fixed to equity and right, that he can only desire what is good. True, men will have their pleasures and appetites ; they can also submit their

wills to their evil affections and lusts, and thus all is perverted and corrupted in them. And why? Because man is of himself so subject to evil fancies and lewdness, that he keeps no bounds, but his moral constitution becomes quite deranged; but with God it is quite the reverse. And why? Because the will of God is the rule of rules, the law of laws, the justice of all justice, the equity of all equity, the right of all right. In short, it is the service of all good.

Herein we must condemn the doctrine of the papists; for mark what the papist theologians have said, 'That God has two wills, one ordained and the other absolute.' This is a diabolical blasphemy. When they suppose a will of God different from that which is ordained by him, it is as if they said, that he has a licentious will, (*debordée*) that he observes neither moderation, nor measure, nor right, nor equity in what he does. And to attribute this to God is it not to blaspheme? On the contrary, we say that this will of God is ordained, that it is the source of all equity and

justice. Nevertheless as I have already said, the justice of God will not be so known to us, that we shall be able to see the reason why he does that, but always is it (true) that whatever he does tends to a good and worthy end. For example, consider the wars that take place in the world, they do not take place without great excesses being committed, and even things so fearful as to make one's hair stand on end. If ever a murder be committed, it is a horrible crime; but in a war a hundred thousand are perpetrated. If a man's goods be robbed, it is a great cruelty, but in time of war a hundred thousand houses will be robbed and sacked. Again if a man blaspheme twice or thrice, people will say, 'What a shame!' (*malheur*) But in a war, there will be an infinite number of blasphemies; and moreover so execrable that it is horrible even to think of them. There will also be fornication, rape, and other enormities. Yet wars do not take place without the will of God and his disposal, as is certain, and Holy Writ is full of that doctrine; for it says that



God breaketh the spears, and maketh the battle to cease, and that he assembles armies, that he makes them prepare for battle, that kings and princes are as it were his soldiers, and that he sets them to work; that he conducts them, and even leads them by the hand; that they are only his darts, his arrows, his swords, his axes; this is what Scripture discovers to us.

How then can it be true that God does these things? Is there unrighteousness in him? Certainly not. But he sends them as his scourges into the world, and by a just judgment, he punishes us as he pleases; and though we see not yet the reason of it, we must know that all he does is just. Behold Job, he enquires not why God had deprived him of all his substance, and had entirely stripped him of all. It is true, he reasons, strongly on this point, that it is not for his sins. Nevertheless he concluded that this did not happen to him without the foreknowledge of God, that all the evil he was suffering, though it was difficult to bear, was still capa-

ble of being softened by the patience which he possessed.

And in fact, does he murmur against God? No, but he says, "The Lord gave it me, he hath taken it away, his name be blessed!" and he says it not hypocritically but in truth. Let us learn then that when God does any thing, although there appear to us no reason for them, yet we must not fail to adore his counsel and judgment, and to confess that it is just and equitable; and if nevertheless our eyes be dazzled, and if this light be to us incomprehensible, nevertheless God will declare to us that which now is unknown; that is, when he shall have fully united us to him, as the end to which he is calling us.

I know well that I have been prolix, although I have aimed at brevity as much as was possible, so that I have curtailed what I intended to say, in order to pass from one point to another as briefly as I could. But the subject could not be explained by me at length as it well deserves to be, and since it is necessary and very useful to be imprinted on our

hearts. If I have omitted many things which would have been good and useful to learn, for the confirmation of this argument, I will entreat the brethren to whom God has given grace, to speak of them, to touch upon these points, that we may be so much the better strengthened in this word which we have received of God.

After Mr. John Calvin had propounded what is said above, the other ministers added, each in his turn, what follows :—

#### M. ABEL POPIN.

The doctrine we have heard, and which has been satisfactorily explained, need not be repeated, and there is no occasion to add to it, nor to bring any thing further to bear on it, save a full and entire faith. For this is the obstacle to our making progress in this Holy Word, as we ought, that we add not faith to what it discovers to us,—a thing nevertheless absolutely necessary. Here then is the necessary addition to the proposition we have heard,

that we add to it faith, which as I have just said is so necessary, that we must beg of God, that he would cause us to advance in it more and more. Nevertheless we see also that it is quite necessary to bring forward passages of Scripture, the chief and the most powerful, and the most applicable of which have been alleged, and moreover very well explained. But yet we see that the things of which we make common and familiar use, bring us a knowledge of this, viz. that we cannot be ignorant that this profession which we make in Christianity, is found in this word 'faith,' that so when we speak of faith, we say, that it is by virtue of this faith that we are Christians, 'Now if it be so, it is certain that faith brings us a true persuasion, a certain discovery of the good will of God to us, which has been manifested and so (gloriously) revealed to us in our Lord Jesus Christ, as to be sealed by his Holy Spirit in our hearts. And that causes us to receive also the promises of God, which themselves depend on his good pleasure.



It is then impossible to know Jesus Christ without the favor of God towards us, by which he has chosen and elected us, as has already been amply spoken and declared. Here then is this word of 'faith' which we are in the habit of using, which adduces reason sufficient to show that it is on the election of God that all the good things we have in our Lord Jesus Christ depend; and by election, I mean this favor of God, by which he chooses us, in giving us to Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ to us.

In like manner, we see that according to this faith, when we wish to bear witness of it, we set before us the favor of God; as when we call him, "Our Father which art in heaven," we declare thereby that he has given us to know his good will, that we firmly believe he is our Father, that he would show himself to us in such a character, and that we are not ignorant of this great wisdom, which he purposed should be revealed to us in our Saviour Jesus Christ, that he has elected and chosen us before we had knowledge of him, even

before the world was created; as has been very well expounded to you.

Moreover we see that having borne testimony to that point, we beg that his name may be hallowed. Now it is certain that therein we approve of the will of God, as being just, good and right, as it is in truth, by declaring not only that it ought to be glorified, but that in all his acts it ought to be recognized and perceived as just; in order that we may give him the praise for it which is his due. Otherwise we cannot contemplate this good will of God, his goodness and mercy, which he has exerted on behalf of his people. In fine, we ought to recognize the goodness of God in that he is willing to be called "Our Father," provided we still recognize him as the Almighty. For these are two inseparable things, the power and goodness of God. And it is the first article of our faith and what we ought to believe, that we confess God to be our Father, so as nevertheless we be convinced of his boundless power; and in that belief we have somewhat to console us, and to

humble us. For if we were all considered as one body, we should find that we were all of the same condition. The children of God then must rely upon his goodness which he causes them to experience, and let them give him thanks for it, when they know that his will is that they should be separated from the unbelieving; not that they be, or had been worthy of it, but inasmuch as he elected them by his gratuitous loving-kindness. And besides, they have somewhat to humble them when they think of this power and goodness of God, which he only exercises for their salvation. And thus, here are the things of which we make a common use, which ought to serve to make us consider this doctrine, that we may approve and esteem as certain what has been said.

Nothing more is then to be said, save to add, an Amen, to this doctrine, saying, Such is my belief; I would thus believe, I would tie myself there absolutely, without ever varying or declining from it in the least possible degree. And thus let us beseech our good God

that it would please him, so to conduct us by his Holy Spirit, that we should keep our ears closed to all these blasphemers and evil persons who would turn us aside from the true simplicity of his word: but that we may follow him with such fear and obedience, that we may be able altogether to say this Amen, in truth. So we believe, and in this we would wish to live and die.

#### M. JACQUES BERNARD.

I give my assent to what has been said, and affirm that it is the pure and simple Word of God, on which we must rest our faith. I will say moreover, what I am not ashamed to say to all, that I praise the Lord who hath vouchsafed to grant us of this city the favor of possessing men so learned and eloquent, as those who have already spoken to uphold this doctrine, and to confound those who gainsay it; as St. Paul, a chosen vessel, was not ashamed to preach it to the Romans and Ephesians, as we have already heard by the chapters before cited.



This I say advisedly, because there are some who assert that such topics should not be discussed in public. As if it were a sin to uphold the truth! And when we speak what the Lord commands, what is it they would ask of us? We hear what Balaam, said to Balak, king of the Midianites in Num. xxii. "I will speak only that which the Lord shall put into my mouth." He observes also in the xxiii. ch. of the same book, "Did I not say, that I would do all that the Lord commanded me." The Lord hath put into our mouth to declare, that some are chosen to live for ever, and that the rest are left in their corruption. What is this, but to say, that some are chosen to be saved, and the others destined to eternal fire. We have then (this doctrine) to declare, because the Lord hath put it into our mouth. And therefore I beg my brethren to speak that which the Lord hath given them to say, that it may be manifest to all, that we are not of the number of "those dogs (of whom Esaias the prophet speaks) who cannot bark," but that truly we are ministers of the Gospel of

our Lord, to maintain (as far as in us lies) this doctrine, to which I give my assent (as I have said), and which I approve, as moreover, it is the truth of an infallible God who cannot lie.

Wherefore I beseech all those who are of God, that they receive it with such a fear and reverence as is becoming, knowing that if they are entirely persuaded and firmly grounded therein, they are partakers of eternal life. Otherwise, let those who reject it, and who will not assure themselves (of its truth), know, that they are not called to this life, but are destined to eternal perdition, if they persist in (rejecting) it.

M. NICHOLAS DES GALARS.

My Brethren, We ought to know how necessary it is for each of us, to be settled in the belief of this doctrine. For it is impossible that we should ever be in peace or repose in our consciences, if we have not such a foundation within, as to know that God hath chosen

us. But still all our hope must take its origin from God; for if we would attribute to ourselves a single jot, there will be nothing firm or certain in it. We must know then that being called, we have already been elected, and that that depends on the paternal goodness of our God, and upon his election which took place before all time. If we have not this foundation, we shall read the whole Scripture without receiving from it instruction to our profit. Let us consider how St. Paul proceeds to assure those to whom he writes. He shows that this sanctification comes from the circumstance of their being elected. Now St. Paul speaks entirely of this election, on which, when we depend, we perceive that it is the immutable counsel of God. Otherwise if we possess not that assurance, Satan would soon take us by storm, so as to overthrow the principal foundations of our faith, and so to encompass us with his errors, that it would be very difficult to escape thence. In short, since we shall not be able to understand what passes our comprehension, let us not be so presumptuous,

as to wish to subject God to ourselves, as if he were bound to reveal to us what he would keep secret. But contrariwise, let us submit ourselves entirely to him, as is perfectly just; and not advancing beyond what he has declared by his word, let us say with David, "Lord, I will sing of judgment and mercy."

For it is not without reason that he combines those two words: for those who have known the mercy of God in their election, assuredly recognize his just judgment, in the reprobation of the wicked. And that serves to humbles us, when we ponder on the mercy of God, which he has exercised towards us, if then we consider what is his justice, we then distrust ourselves, to put our whole confidence in his goodness. When those two points are known by us so as to be sure of them, we shall then be subjected to God with a true obedience.

#### M. PHILIPPE DE ECCLESIA.

As for God's election, no one can judge aught respecting it, save inasmuch as it has



been revealed to us by the Word, which is sure. We have several passages in the Scriptures which bear testimony to it; and amongst other sentences worthy of remembrance, let us take that which is the clearest, Ephes. i. where mention is made of the cause of our election, when it is said, "such was the good pleasure and will of God." Here then is the cause of it; and that must satisfy us, since St. Paul adduces no other reason than this good will of God, and thereby he intends to exclude all merit and dignity, and would shew us that this election of God, is gratuitous and based upon his mere mercy. But still we must not (as has been remarked) so regard this good pleasure of God, as to separate it from what follows in St. Paul, where he adds, (that it is) "in Jesus Christ." For God hath not elected us solely in himself, but he hath loved us in Jesus Christ, and accepts us in Jesus Christ. And as has been observed, Jesus Christ is the mirror and the model, in whom we may consult the cause of our election; for we can neither understand or know if we be

elected of God or not, except Jesus Christ, (who has descended from God his Father) reveal him to us. Besides, St. Paul adds the final cause of our election, when he says, "that we might be holy and without spot, before his face." We have then been elected according to his good pleasure and will of God in Jesus Christ; and he says advisedly, in Jesus Christ, for if we should look for election out of Jesus Christ, we should not find it, and those who are not in him; are reprobates.

Nevertheless there are some who say, how shall we know if we be elected? It is true that I shall readily confess that it is the good pleasure of God, when I am elected in Jesus Christ without any merit. But how shall I know that I am of the number of the elect of God? I am no theologian, so that I shall not be able to enter into this counsel of God which is concealed from me. How then has God declared to me that I am one of his elect? Now it is certain that we cannot know that we are elected of God, *a priori*, (as they say,) that is to say, that we

and thereby reverses the order which God has laid down in Holy Scripture, we must understand that God bears us testimony that our election is sure by the faith which he has given us. It is necessary then for election to precede faith, and that faith should follow after. To assert and defend the contrary, is to lead men's minds into errors from which it is no easy matter to escape.

Such being the case, what ground is there for asserting that we possess a free will, whereby we at liberty to reject what God is willing to give us, that is, faith, or at our pleasure to receive it when we think fit? If such were the case what would become of the certainty and sureness of our salvation? I shall adduce a passage of Isaiah to confirm this doctrine, that we depend entirely on the election of God, and that is absolutely necessary that this free grace of God should precede the possibility of our belief, and faith attaches to Christ as its true object; and we never shall have approach to our God, except his Son leads and conducts us thither; nevertheless, we

must first know how it is that we come to Jesus Christ.

This then is what the prophet Isaiah says, "Here am I and the children whom thou hast given me." This passage is by the Apostle (in Heb. xii.) attributed to our Lord Jesus Christ, who uses similar words. This is expressly said of Jesus Christ. He presents himself before God his Father, not only as chief of the teachers and ministers of the word of God, but also as the only teacher, by whose mouth all the ancient teachers spoke. He presents his elect, those who are given to him. It is then true that we cannot go to God; we cannot by any means approach him, except Jesus Christ leads us thither by the hand. *So must* we also know that God gives the Son that which he brings to him, and he must have given him his elect, before he presents them.

Thereby then we know that when we have faith in God by Jesus Christ, this arises from his having been pleased to choose, us according to his good counsel, which is to us incompre-



hensible, into which we may not presume to enter; only we must content ourselves with this faith which he has given us, whereby he gives us a certain testimony that we are of the number of his elect. But we must always observe, that the Father gives to the Son those whom he has elected, and that he will not suffer them to perish.

This is confirmed by the passage which has been adduced from John vi. where it is said, "All that my Father hath given me, shall come to me." Whoever then comes to Christ, we may infer is given him by the Father. So we may not say, that men possess the liberty of accepting or rejecting faith according to their pleasure; else it would be necessary to say that the elect are not led by God to salvation. But on the contrary, we must know that God has his people, whom he has elected from all time, whom he gives from hand to hand, to our Lord Jesus Christ, as if he said to him, 'Lo, I give you my people, and desire you to be protector of my elect.' See how we may know that we are thus in the hand of our Lord

Jesus Christ, namely, that we have been given to him by God his Father, because he has elected us by his free grace.

Else, if it were left to us to receive or reject faith; when it is offered to us, to accept it in our own strength, what would be the consequence of this? What would become of the certainty of eternal blessedness which we ought to possess? On what would our salvation depend? On the shifting will of man! And what assurance would there be if it were necessarily left to man, according to his fancy, to say, Now I will believe! When immediately afterwards, he might again abandon the whole matter. Again let us put the case, that a man is well disposed to believe, then since he is inconstant and mutable, his will will undergo a change and behold he is turned aside, as soon as some fancy comes into his soul. It could not be otherwise, I assert, even to the most constant and unwavering in the world, if our faith depended on our own virtue, as these unhappy persons affirm.

But as we now know that we are given by

the hand of the Father to his Son, and that he takes us under his protection, in consequence of this gift, we see whereon our faith may rest, and what is its foundation, that is the goodness and mercy of God, being assured that what the Son has received in trust from the Father "shall never perish," that when we are under the protection and safeguard of our Saviour Jesus Christ, we shall be beyond all dangers; at least we shall not be deprived of the salvation which he has acquired for us, and into possession of which we enter already by the faith we have in him. This is in few words what I wished to add to that which my brethren have said, to confirm the doctrine which has been adduced.

In conclusion, I beseech you in the name of God, that you suffer not yourselves to be dazzled by the greatness of man, of whom it seems that they would turn away the simple from heaven by their loftiness and excellence; for it is thus that they set themselves to overthrow the will of God. Moreover when we see here their splendid rhetoric, that they have

grand and magniloquent words to fill the ears of the ignorant, let us not be carried away thereby, but let us walk in the fear and truth of God. It is true that it is simple, but it has more majesty than all the pomp and excellence of these voluble tongues, which evaporate in empty words, and think to resist the truth of God, on which we ought always to depend, and never to turn aside from it by any means, whatever may be the consequence resulting from it.

#### M. LOYS TREPPEREAU.

This holy doctrine is so entire and perfect that there is no need to add any thing to it. But the chief point is that we use it to good purposes, that it may serve us as armour, against the blasphemers who would turn us aside from the true doctrine of salvation, and from the path of this doctrine. And to comprehend in a few words what we ought to know, learn we, that when reprobation and election are spoken of, election takes place gratuitously,



and reprobation by the just judgment of God. For we may not say that God is the cause of the damnation of the wicked, but it is their own sin. And even, though we had been all destroyed and ruined, and God had never had pity on us, even this were a just judgment, and there would only be occasion therein to give him glory, confessing that he is a just judge, since he punishes the wicked for their iniquities.

As to what some say that God thereby "is an accepter of persons," in condemning one and saving another, this is only a means sought by the devil to obscure and overthrow the certainty of our salvation. But still when the question is to show how God is just in all he does, if there were any illustration worthy to be advanced, to cause us to understand that the glory of God must be in unison with his judgment, there could be none more appropriate than that which is found in human justice. Observe my brethren, here is a judge who justly condemns a man to death, and condemns him to die by such and such a punishment of

death! Will any be found to murmur against such a decision? No, on the contrary, men would praise such a justice. Oh God be praised! they would say. Why then should we not praise God, when he reprobates the wicked. Yet we must not say that God is the *cause* of their reprobation, but as I have said, the sin which is in them.

In short, the election of God is gratuitous and the reprobation of the wicked is just. Yet we must not enquire *why* God does this; but be it our endeavour to walk in all humility and modesty, considering what we have received of God, to give thanks for it: especially when he bears witness of our election, and makes us partakers of his grace, which he has opened to us in Jesus Christ. And when we have once tasted it, let us follow his doctrine, for it is announced to us by him, and let us persevere in it to the end, despite all the hindrances which might happen to turn us from it; as I now beseech this merciful God to give us grace to live and die therein.

## M. REMOND CHAUVET.

My Brethren, I give thanks to God for the great treasures which he opens to us in this doctrine which is so full of consolation. It is true that though this doctrine be such as I have just said, rich and full of consolation, yet it is not without danger and difficulty when we come to discuss it. But so one cannot cross the lake or sail on the sea in the course of traffic, without great difficulty, and many dangers. He who would cross the sea or lake without a boat, and without guidance, would cast himself into gulfs and destroy himself.

But if he embarks in a ship under good guidance, he will have a prosperous, pleasant, and profitable navigation. So when we would treat of God's predestination, of his electing his people, and reprobating the wicked, we must enter thereupon after the manner of navigation propounded by the brother who proposed the subject, and by those who have confirmed the doctrine: viz, that we know in general that we are all lost and condemned.

But if we see that God has done us the favour of illuminating us, and calling us to the knowledge of his truth, whereby we know and are assured that we are his children, because he hath predestinated us before the creation of the world, we have reason and occasion to glorify God, and to admire his goodness that he so unfolds his favour and mercy to us, who are such wretched and miserable creatures.

If we see on the other hand, that God reprobates some, we have occasion to recognize the justice of his decision who does nothing without just cause, though that cause be hidden from us. Therefore we should come to the point whither St. Paul would lead us, to the admiration of those secret and incomprehensible judgments of God, to say with him, "O the height! O the depth, and the riches of the patience of God, How incomprehensible are thy judgments." Rom. xi. 33. I would add a word, because there are in the present day, dogs that bark and bite here and there, seeking for something to cavil, and say, 'O we must not believe men, but God.' Well,



but who denies this? But when men speak in the name and authority of God, and others receive what they adduce, in his name, is that believing men! But it need not excite our wonder if such dogs cease not to bark, when they meet with the doctrine of God, because they are possessed by the devil who conducts and governs them. 2 Tim. i. 26. We know that from all past time, Satan hath held in horror and abomination the doctrine of salvation, wherefore they must contradict it as much as in them lieth; as we observe, that they seek only to overthrow this holy doctrine, and to bury the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wherefore my brethren, in the name of God, I exhort you all, to keep fast hold of this doctrine which is propounded to us by the mouth of men who speak in the name of God. In this I believe, in this would I live, persevere, and die, through the grace of God.

M. MATTHEW MALESIAN,

We may dispute, and speak much of this doctrine, but it will be to no purpose if we

have not two points fixed. The first, that we are certain in our minds, that we are all lost before God, that we are ruined in our nature, and worthy of eternal death, as St. Paul says in Ephesians, "that we are all the children of wrath and of death before God." (chap. v. 3.) The other point is, that it is necessary for every Christian to understand wherein consists his salvation, to know whereby he may please God, and by what means he may attain eternal life. Now the foundation of our salvation lies and consists in the gratuitous mercy of God. The means whereby we may attain eternal life, is simply in the satisfaction that our Lord Jesus Christ has made for us.

Besides, we must remember the passage in the Ephesians, which has been adduced, that as God has elected us of his free grace, that we might be holy, so he has elected us that we might be to his praise. For these are two (final) ends, (as St. Paul states them) in God's electing us. As when a man builds a house, if any one ask him why he does it, he would answer, that it may be a house, but is that the

ultimate end? No, but it is that the house may be subservient to him, that he may enjoy it and dwell in it. In like manner, we have been elected by God, that being holy, and without blemish before him, we might be to his glory. And we cannot be to the praise and glory of God, except we attribute to him all authority and pre-eminence over us, and acknowledge that he makes use of all his creatures as seemeth him good; and yet that he ceases not to be just, and to do all things with equity and uprightness. The doctrine we have heard is good and holy, and perfectly true; I have listened to it these ten years past; and I beseech the Lord to cause me to persevere to the end, confirming and approving all that my brothers have said.

#### M. MICHEL COP,

Brethren and Sisters, The doctrine you have heard is an infallible doctrine, to which all Christians ought to keep firm, and in which they should persevere. And so for my own part, by God's grace, I would live, persevere

and die herein. And though the doctrine has already been handled sufficiently, yet in confirmation of it I would add a few words. It is that if we deny the reprobation of the wicked, and do not admit the election of the sons of God, we must make mockery of the Gospel of God, and especially of the word whereof our Lord makes mention in Matt. xxv. where it is said, "The king seated on his throne, shall say to the sheep that shall be on his right, Come ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom which has been prepared for you before the foundation of the world." And on the other hand, "Go depart from me all ye that commit iniquity; depart to the inextinguishable fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels." This judgment then cannot be true, if there be no such thing as eternal reprobation; as also, if there be not eternal election, this decision could not be pronounced. Now there is no change in God; he never alters: his purposes, his judgments, his thoughts, his deliberations are eternal. So then if there be such persons as the



damned (as there are in truth) they must be damned by the eternal judgment of God, by his decree laid and ordained before the foundation of the world; and so if there be such a class as the saved, elect, and predestined, they must have been so before the foundation of the world.

As for the universal proposition which states "that God would have all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth," let not the enemies of truth take any exception against it. For if we take it in its utmost extensiveness, it will follow that no one will be damned; for as saith the prophet Isaiah (Chap. xlvi.) "My counsel shall hold, and all my will shall accomplished. If then they will so take it, it follows that God will have all men saved, and none will be damned, so that consequently it is folly to believe in the Gospel.

Wherefore brethren and sisters, let us be on our guard, lest men who can prate well, should lead us astray by their words, which are not only vain, but blasphemous, and full of danger. Let us hold fast the pure truth of God, and

acknowledge that he hath an immutable counsel, that what he has determined from all eternity will be accomplished, and nought of it shall fail.

#### M. JEAN PERERY.

My Brethren and Sisters, We have here heard truths whereon we ought so to meditate, that each temptation which may happen to turn us aside, may be repelled; which will be easy for us to do, when we shall be persuaded and convinced of what has been said: nevertheless, as said the brother who last spoke, we must be on our guard, lest Satan, by means of the wicked who are his agents, should draw nigh to overthrow this foundation on which we must build our faith. We must also remember what St. Paul says, when he exhorts believers what means to adopt when a false doctrine happens to be set forth against the truths of God, I mean that we are not only to hold such a doctrine in execration, but also all those who uphold it, and that we must esteem them as cursed of God. I am astonished how men

who would call themselves wise, at the first glimpse only of a man who comes to them, should suffer themselves to be seduced as by a dissolute woman and so be abused.

For these abusers promise things which they cannot perform, they promise to satisfy men's minds: and their own are so agitated and distracted, that they know not what they are about; they promise to show to man what all of them put together, cannot understand. And on the contrary, we know that when man would discover the reasons of the things which God has done under the sun, he will find them out. How then shall we dare to enter into the council of God to seize there what he would have concealed from us.

Thus we see, that the dogs who come and bark against this doctrine, seek only to lead every thing to perdition. True they make noble professions, but let us be on our guard against such deceivers, they have empty coffers, yet they would have us to believe that they are wonders within.

Let us then determine to hold fast by that

which has been shewn and taught by God, that we may give him the honour which is his due.

And since our good God has assembled us all here, some from one hundred, some from two hundred leagues off, and we have come to be instructed in his word, let us show how we have profited by it, and never suffer ourselves to be turned away from it, by any means whatever. If we see many who seek to turn us out of the right way, let us avoid such wretches, and never join ourselves to such mockers of God. As for myself, I protest, that by the grace of God, I will never join them myself. Wherefore thereby I moreover exhort you all in the name of God, that we all separate ourselves from their company, that we be not diverted by their evil conversations and blasphemies, from the purity of the word of God and his holy doctrine, but persevere therein even to the end.

M. JEAN FABRI.

My Brethren, What has already been said, as well by the brother, who stated the pro-



position, as by the others who have already spoken, is quite sufficient; yet as this presumptuous firebrand has set forth a false doctrine, saying that our salvation depends upon our free will, and that we cannot be saved, if we have not within us a liberty whereby we receive the faith; and that this proceeds from us and not from God, and that God bestows no more gifts upon one than another! I will add only an authority of St. Paul taken from Rom. xi. in which place St. Paul adduced the lix. chap. of Isaiah, who says, "He who brings deliverance shall come out of Zion, and shall take away the unbelief of Jacob, and they shall possess from me this covenant, that I will take away their sins." Rom. xi. 26, 27. Isa. ix. 20, 21. "They are enemies regarding the Gospel for your sakes, but they are beloved according to the election for the fathers' sakes." Rom. xi. 28. Here is a sentence wherein St. Paul shows that unbelief is taken away by him that brings deliverance: that the sins are also taken away by him who will come from Zion, who is our

Lord Jesus Christ. It is not then our free will. As for the individual who has advanced this doctrine, let him put forth his own power, and deliver himself from this error wherein he is plunged. If it be true, that we can deliver ourselves by our own prowess, and free will, even without coming to Jesus Christ, and can disengage ourselves from so many hindrances which keep us back so that we cannot approach God, let him deliver himself from his ignorance and error! Nevertheless we see, as I have already said, that it is our Lord Jesus Christ who delivers us from our infirmity; it is by his means that we are agreeable to God his Father; as moreover it is he who intercedes between him and us, that we may receive grace from him.

Now this grace is not bestowed upon all. This is shown by St. Paul in 2 Thess. ii. where he is speaking of the man of sin, the son of perdition, who will come with signs and wonders. Towards the end, he adds, that he will send an effectual delusion to those who perish, that they may believe a lie. Here then

(on the one hand) is God delivering men from unbelief and their sins by his Son. On the other, he says that he "will send a spirit of delusion, a spirit that shall cause (*un esprit d'efficace*) the reprobate to believe a lie." This is attributed to God; is attributed without imputing to him the blame or guilt in the condemnation of sinners. Herein there is a double causation; one the remote, which is the will of God, the other the proximate, which is the malice, the infidelity, the iniquity, the rebellion of man: man then is worthy to be thus rejected. But still, we must perceive herein another cause; that which we call the remote, which is the will of God.

Thus we may well conclude, as well by the passage in question as by what has been already adduced by St. Paul, that we receive not faith of our own free will, but that it is through the grace of God, who has chosen us to bring us to his Son, that in him we may be enlightened by his Holy Spirit and by his word.

When we believe in Christ Jesus, it is by

special grace; and as for the reprobate, being rejected by the just judgment of God and left in their (original) corruption, they are justly lost, without any blame being imputable to God but to men (only). We by no means intend to accuse God of injustice; we would not (by any means) accuse him of acceptance of persons; but we mean to assert that he has decreed from all eternity what he would do, that this has been done, with equity justice and righteousness, yea, with a righteousness that is irreproachable. Wherefore let us be well assured that he has chosen some before the creation of the world, (as it is written in Eph. chap. i.) and that he has rejected others, according to that sentence of St. Paul, "that he shows mercy to whom he will, and hardens whom he will." Let us moreover regard what he has added, that we are elect "unto sanctification," that we might be holy, and might live in all holiness and virtue. It is the regenerating Spirit that separates us, and sets us apart from the wicked, and bears witness that



we are elected of God even before the foundation of the world, as has been made manifest to us, when we were called to the knowledge of God by the preaching of the Gospel.

Wherefore my brethren, I exhort and beseech you, so much as in me lies, that you beware of those who would do away with the Gospel, who sow false doctrines, who plant errors in this place, and excite disturbances in this church. However plausible they may appear, be not ye carried away with error, (*transportés fausement*) be not unsettled and fluctuating, so as to say, 'I know not which to believe.' When any one comes who does but make a casual observation (*souffler dans l'oreille*) be not deceived: Take special care that you be not ruled by such inconstancy and fickleness; but whatever grounds they adduce, be not you led away from the purity and simplicity of the Word of God: be firmly fixed in this doctrine which has now been unfolded; as it likewise is the infallible truth of God. For my own part, I protest, that I give it my

assent and consent. And I beseech the Lord to give me grace to persevere in it to the end and therein to die.

#### M. JEAN DE ST. ANDIE.

We must not be surprised if this doctrine is assailed. Satan (as we are well aware) the enemy of our salvation assaults us on the point where he knows our strong hold is. Wherefore let us take good care to hold fast this doctrine, and be satisfied with its simplicity. For the more (violently) it be assaulted, the more necessary to salvation is it. Holy Scripture teaches us not to go beyond what is necessary for us to know, to find the cause of the ruin of man. All are lost in Adam and from this general and universal condemnation, it has pleased God by his mercy to save whom he would. Moreover those who lie under such a condemnation, can do only evil, but their evil acts must not be imputed to God; for God does not oblige them to commit sin. This must be attributed to

our natural corruption, and since this corrupt nature is addicted to evil, it can do nought but evil only.

The same thing may be both good and evil good in God, evil in man ; for the intention of; God is good : that of man, evil. When we attribute all power, authority and superiority to God, we ought also to attribute to him a foresight whereby from all eternity he has deliberated what shall be the destiny of all his creatures. Into this secret (counsel) we are not permitted, nor is it possible for us to enter. But we must be satisfied with what he has caused us to know of it in a general way, that it is throughout and in every portion just, and that he never oversteps the (due) bounds (of equity) in whatever he does.

As for those who would maintain the justice of God, and in order to maintain it contradict his doctrine, certain it is that they obscure and overturn all the truth of God. For we ought to consider that the justice of God is united to his truth, and the one cannot be separated from the other, so that when we say

that God has done a thing, we may know that it is well and justly done, since God determined to do it and did it.

Moreover, let us take care to understand this passage of St. Paul, which has been adduced, and very well explained, that God would have all to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." If we take this for all persons in general, let us notice a moment what would be the consequences of such a supposition. We must draw one of two inferences ; either first, that if all are to be saved, then there shall no one be damned, which is directly against the 1st Article of our faith. So for my own part, I consent to what has been said before me, and approve of it ; that God has his eternal counsel, whereby he disposes of all his creatures as he will ; that moreover he does so with justice, as the Spirit of God so often testifies in Holy Writ.

Thanks be to God, that he has been graciously pleased to use his electing power to show his grace in me, and not to make use of me by my condemnation, therein to show



his great judgment; which he might even have done without committing injustice against me, and I could have had no ground to murmur against him, according to St. Paul's admonition, when he says, "Who art thou O man, who wouldst plead before God." Yet I glorify my God that this doctrine, can be clearly understood, since it has been now explained to us in so simple a manner, that even those who object to us that we derive this doctrine from men, ought to hold themselves as more than convinced when they see the passages of Holy Writ which have been adduced, and we cannot deny that it is God who has spoken by the mouth of men.

After the above mentioned ministers had thus spoken, each in his turn, and has been here declared, Mr. Jean Calvin, gave notice, that if there were any one who had any doubt, he should propose it, that an answer might be made, and that every one might be fully persuaded of this doctrine. This done, Mr. Claude Balluel, added as follows:—

Though there is no need for me to speak after men of such excellent understanding, by whom this doctrine of our salvation has been explained to us, yet since God has granted me the favor to deliver me from this tyranny of anti-christ, wherein I was so long bound, and to lead me hither to the company of his saints, where I daily receive great consolation, I cannot hold my tongue till I have here made profession of the faith wherein I would live and die.

And since St. Paul, writing to Timothy, 2 Epis. ch. ii. sets forth the rule which believers should follow, when they are called to the knowledge of the truth, where he says, that "the Lord knows his own, and that every one that nameth the name of the Lord should depart from all iniquity. Accordingly I would declare that God's grace assisting, I will turn away from all evil doctrine, all lies and falsehoods, satisfying myself in all things with the truth of God, as made known by his (Holy) Scripture.

Thus I believe in God the Father, Almighty

who hath elected and chosen us before the commencement of the world, in his Son our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom he has promised us eternal life, whereof we are already in possession by faith since it hath pleased him in his own good time to open to us the preaching of the Gospel. I believe in the Son who is his image, who was sent to the earth to preach and maintain his truth, whereof he made confession before Pilate. I believe in the Holy Spirit, who bears witness in our hearts that we shall be in the number of the blessed on the day of resurrection. I believe in the Holy Church, that is to say the present, into which it hath pleased God to lead me, beseeching him that it may please him to keep me herein, so that I may live and die in it.

Wherefore, let each one more and more confirm himself in this purity and simplicity of the Word of God, that being united together, we may pursue the road which the Saviour points out, whereby to attain eternal life, unto which he calls and invites us ; and that to confirm and ratify our own election,

we bear a like testimony of it, by our good life and conversation, that the poor blinded idolaters may be drawn to the knowledge of the truth, to unite themselves in the unity of the faith with us ; and that the wicked and reprobate, who are utterly obstinate and rebels, be so separated from us, that we esteem them abominable and excommunicated : since they themselves likewise separate themselves from the assembly of the saints. Such is my faith.

LASTLY. Mr. Jean Calvin, concluded by praying as follows :—

My Brethren, We have to thank God with great devotion that he has chosen us before we could know him. For we were banished and rejected from our salvation, and moreover of our own proper nature we could only separate ourselves from it, had he not chosen us from the creation of the world. Besides, seeing the wicked to be reprobate, who must be to us examples of the judgment of God, let us recognize (the truth) that we have merited as much, since as regards our nature,



we were in no better condition than they. Let it remind us of that sentence of our Lord Jesus Christ, that "every tree which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up;" and therefore let us glorify our God for this assurance which he has given us by his Word and by his Holy Spirit, that as once, he sent his Son into the world for our redemption, and that he accepts us through him, that thus he calls us to eternal life, and to the immortal inheritance which he has prepared for us in heaven. Let us lay the foundation of our election on this immoveable counsel which he has determined from all eternity, and upon his good pleasure: let us here maintain our ground with such firmness and constancy as never to be turned aside from it, whatever be the machinations of Satan, and though he has agents and ministers, who only seek to draw us away from the right path, into which our good God hath once introduced us; yet let us never swerve from it, in the smallest degree.

May it then please this good God as he

hath elected and chosen us, now to confirm and strengthen in us the constancy and assurance we ought to possess, so that knowing him as our Father, we give true proof that we are his, remembering all our poor brethren who are still kept in the miserable slavery of Babylon, under the Roman anti-christ.

Amen.